GOD'S WORD THE MIRACLE *Seed*

experiencing God's supernatural power through His Word

ASHISH RAICHUR

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GOD'S WORD THE MIRACLE *Seed*

The seed is the word of God.

Luke 8:11

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Introduction

All of us desire to experience God's work in our lives. We desire God's power to save, heal, deliver, and work miracles both personally and for others. Very often we expect a spectacular display of God's power, something that will "wow" us. While it is true that God by the power of His Holy Spirit will demonstrate His work in spectacular ways, with signs and wonders, we must not forget that God also works by His Word. The Spirit of God releases His power through the Word of God. While the process of reading, meditating, and receiving God's Word into our lives may not appear spectacular, it is no less supernatural, because it is still God who is at work. Many believers miss out on the supernatural work of God, which God desires to release through His Word in their everyday lives, because they keep seeking the spectacular.

Another common problem is that many believers look to the anointed man or woman of God to administer the power of God for them. While God has anointed ministers, who serve people by the power of His Spirit, eventually, every believer should come to the place where they learn to receive from God through His Word and by His Spirit. Jesus invited all of us to go directly to Him, to eat of Him and drink from Him, so that each one of us can become dispensers of His grace to others and bring them to Jesus so that they too can eat and drink from Him. We should not become dependent on intermediaries.

We know that God works through His Word. This is how He created everything, by His power released through His Word. God's Word is a carrier of the life and power of God that can affect every aspect of our lives. God has given us His Word and seeks to work in us through the power of His Word. He has also revealed to us how to receive His Word so that the life and power contained in His Word is released into us causing His supernatural work to take place in us.

Meditation in God's Word is the process through which the Word becomes implanted in our hearts. Meditation in God's Word involves contemplation, visualization, and confession. You will learn how to practice meditation in God's Word so that the miracle seed of God's Word can produce in your life. This book unveils simple truths that will help us receive and experience the supernatural power of God released in us through His Word, the miracle seed.

God bless!
Ashish Raichur

1. God's Word: The Foundation Of Our Faith

There is one important element in our Christian walk, one so essential that it determines the quality of our entire Christian experience. This is the Word of God. The level of maturity we grow into and the depths we reach in God are determined by the place we give to His Word in our lives. Whether we walk in victory or not and the measure of blessing we experience is greatly influenced by the measure of God's Word that we are able to receive and consistently practice in our daily living.

However, in a world that is given to "phenomena," where the spectacular is sought after, not many are ready to pay attention to the contents of an "Ancient Book." Why would someone spend time reading mere words from a religious book, which some claim to be socially, culturally, and morally irrelevant? And sadly, even among believers, apart from fulfilling an obligation of having a "quiet time," there are not many who have understood the impact and influence the written Scriptures can have on our lives. It is true, that at first the Scriptures may seem lifeless, perhaps even boring for the casual reader. But when we understand its inherent power and the place that God Himself has assigned His Word to have in our lives, the Word is alive! The Word becomes the source of strength, comfort, hope, faith, instruction, and wisdom. We rest our entire present and future on what the Scriptures say. Amidst the storms of life, we know that the Word will sustain us and hold us up. Amid sickness, we know that the Word will bring healing and deliverance. During challenges and pressures, we stand confident on what the Word promises. We can laugh at impossibilities because of the possibilities we see in the Word. Even when we cannot see, touch, hear, smell or taste - we still know - because the Word has produced in us a confident assurance, and a strong, unshakable conviction.

Our hearts' desire is that each one who reads this book, will be brought to this confident assurance in their walk with the Lord. If you have already attained some degree of understanding in the Word, we desire that you will be strengthened and encouraged even more.

The Eternal Word, The Incarnate Word, The Written Word

Luke 24:27
And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Jesus the Son of God, the Eternal Word (John 1:1-4), who became the Incarnate Word (John 1:14) lived by, preached, and taught from the written Word, the Scriptures. From an early age Jesus engaged in the study and learning of the Scriptures (Luke 2:46). He resisted temptations using the written Word (Matthew 4:1-10). The Incarnate Word was anointed by the Spirit and walked in such a way to fulfill the Scriptures (Luke 4:21; Mark 14:49; Luke 24:44). Is not this such an awesome thought, that the Eternal Word, God who became flesh would handle the written Word with such honor? How much more should we?

Through The Foolishness Of Preaching

1 Corinthians 1:21
For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

God in His wisdom has assigned that the eternal destiny of a man's life is determined through the simple preaching of the Gospel message. Consider this! God did not choose an army of angels to take the Good news of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to all men. Instead, through the almost foolish exercise of preaching, which He ordained to be done through mortal, fallible vessels, He has chosen to win the lost. Therefore, preaching or communicating the Gospel is so important. As apostle Paul explained, some may consider both the message and the preaching of it as foolishness. But to those who are called, the message and its preaching reveals Christ, who is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). In a similar manner, God has ordained that the written Scriptures be a tool by which the power and wisdom of God are brought into our lives. It seems almost a mystery that through the words inscribed on the pages of the book we call the Bible, there is divine power and wisdom transmitted into our lives. How could ordinary words, words we use in our everyday life, suddenly take on divine value just because they are printed in a Bible? While the words in themselves are ordinary, the truths they present are divine. While it was man who assembled the words, it was God who inspired the truth that is presented. And it is through understanding and accepting truths that are conveyed through the Words of Scripture, that we enter and experience the wisdom and power of God.

All Scripture Is "God-Breathed"

2 Timothy 3:15-16
15 and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.
16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

When the apostle referred to the "Holy Scriptures" he was talking about the written Scriptures. He ascribes divine authorship to the written Scripture when He says, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."* Even though man penned the words, God was the source and inspiration of the message. Apostle Peter brings this out in a slightly different manner when he states: "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit*" (2 Peter 1:20-21). All Scripture is prophetic in the sense that they were birthed through the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The written Word is divinely inspired. Believing this fact in the very core of your being, can totally transform your view of the Scriptures. If you really believe, all Scripture is inspired by God then you will give high priority to the Word of God in your life. You will open your Bible knowing that the God of this universe is communicating His thoughts to you. Out of His infinite wisdom, He has chosen to distil what He considered essential and sufficient for our lives on earth and has placed them in the pages of the Book. The Scriptures provide teaching (doctrine), conviction, correction (reproof), and instruction.

The Scriptures—Our Window Into God

Psalm 119:18
Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.

The Scriptures provide us with insight into the living God. They reveal the nature, the character, the attributes, and the heart of God. In the pages of Scripture, we find insight into who God is, what He does, His feelings, and His desires. Consequently, it is through the Scriptures that we get to know God and thereby build a personal relationship with Him. Relationship is based on knowledge. Where there is no personal knowledge, there can be no relationship. Further, the depth of knowledge or intimacy attained determines the depth of the relationship. Therefore, to have a deep and close relationship with the living God, one would have to know Him intimately as He is revealed in the Scriptures. It is so exciting to open the pages of the Bible because they are our window into God. When our eyes are opened to see "behind" the lines that we read, we gain an understanding of the splendor and majesty of our God. To base our understanding of God on anything else—be it our experiences, others' opinions and so on—may not always be accurate. It is true that God also reveals Himself in other places, for instance, in His creation. However, whatever information we may derive from other sources must first be examined in the light of the written Scriptures.

The Scriptures—Our Standard, Our Pattern

Psalm 119:133
Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me.

In a world where people do not have definite standards for what is right and wrong, we choose to make the Word of God our standard. We hold what the Scriptures say concerning all matters of life to be true. What God's Word says is right and noble, we consider right and noble. What the Word says is wrong, we likewise consider wrong. We do not "rationalize" (reason), "liberalize" (attempting to be broad-minded), or "contextualize" (make culturally or socially relevant) away the moral standards set forth by the Scriptures. We choose not to settle for anything less than what is set forth in the Scriptures.

God's Word is our guide. We pattern our lives according to the instructions in Scripture. The Scriptures set forth patterns of behavior for husbands, wives, parents, children, employers, employees, for ministers, and for all believers in general. We do our utmost, with the strength of the Holy Spirit, to pattern our conduct, our lifestyles, our values, our beliefs, our goals, and ambitions according to the principles in Scripture. We direct our entire lives by His Word.

The Scriptures—Our Authority

Psalm 119:101
I have restrained my feet from every evil way, that I may keep your word.

We submit to the Scriptures as the final authority in our lives. Even if no man-made structure or law corrects us, we submit to the correction of the Word. We do not wait for someone else to point out our errors, although this may be necessary at times. If we find ourselves doing things that the Word says is wrong, we are willing to make changes so that we may obey the Word. We choose to exercise discipline in our lives so that we can walk in harmony with the Word. Submitting to the Word of God is in fact submitting to God Himself. To rebel against the counsel of the Scriptures is rebellion against God. The Lord Jesus said: "*He who rejects me, and does not receive my words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day*" (John 12:48). The Word of God will be the law according to which all men will be judged.

It is time for the people of God to develop a reverential fear of the written Word of God. We cannot be followers of God without submitting to the authority of His Word in our lives. We cannot be "strong believers" while we continue to do what is contrary to the Scriptures, just because these things may be pleasurable to our body or acceptable to our reasoning. As believers, we must learn to bring our feelings and reasoning in

subjection to the Word. We refrain from every evil and align ourselves to His Word because it is final authority.

Let The Word Dwell In You Richly

Colossians 3:16
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The Word of God is the foundation of our faith. It is the essential ingredient to spiritual growth and maturity. We are to abide in Christ and His Words are to abide in us (John 15:7). Our charge to you is to let the Word of Christ dwell in you in abundance. Spend much time searching, studying, and meditating in the Scriptures. Ask the Holy Spirit for insight and revelation. Let a rich deposit of revelation knowledge be laid up in your heart. Review what you have learnt often. Remind yourself time and again of the spiritual truths that the Spirit of God has brought to your understanding. Use the Word to sing personal psalms, hymns, and songs to the Lord. Teach and encourage other believers in the Word. Put into practice all the revelation knowledge that has been imparted to you. You will thus be establishing a solid foundation upon which you can build your Christian experience.

The person who both hears and practices the Word, according to the Lord, is like a wise man who built his house upon solid ground (Matthew 7:24-25). What kind of a foundation are you building your life upon?

2. God's Word: Its Purity And Power

It was toward the end of four exciting years of college in Manipal, India. Several wonderful things had happened. The most significant of all was that God had enabled some of us young people—just ordinary college students—to work together and lay the groundwork for what would eventually grow into a strong Christian fellowship among the student community. It was the end of the academic year and many of my friends had left for home. Knowing that the dorms would be unusually quiet at this time, I had decided to stay on for a few days just to spend some time alone with the Lord. I specifically wanted to pray about my future and the things that lay ahead of me, even though so much remained unknown. It was during this season of prayer that Isaiah 45:1-3 was deeply impressed upon my spirit. To me, these became cornerstone verses—verses that occupy a special place in my heart. I understood their meaning and the way in which they would apply in my life.

As part of this promise, the Lord said that He would go before us and open for us doors, and that these doors would not be shut. Since then, there have been numerous occasions when I have stood face-to-face with impossibilities and closed doors. Whether it was in getting admission and financial assistantship at universities or visas into countries or rising up after a personal financial crisis, and in so many other situations, I have come back to these verses and stood before God, acknowledging that what He had promised, He will also do. I have taken these verses of Scripture and by the authority granted to us in Christ, have enforced them over circumstances and situations, and have seen them change. I have relied on the purity and power of these verses to an extent that may seem unreasonable to the rational mind, perhaps even foolishness. And I joyfully testify that God's Word has never failed! Similarly, there are many all over the world who can share testimony after testimony of the challenges they had faced and how they put their trust solely on the infallible Word of God and how God by the power of His Word, brought them through triumphantly!

There is a place where we can come to, a place where we love and revere the precious Word of God; a place where our hearts are gripped with an unquestionable confidence in the integrity and power of God's Word; a place where we esteem His Word above anything else; a place where the Word transforms our character, influences our thinking and guides our actions; a place where our hearts yearn and hunger for spiritual understanding that comes through the Word; a place where we long to see more of His majesty as revealed in the Scriptures; a place of pure delight in God's Word. Our prayer is that each one of us will experience the joy of continually abiding in this place.

The Sovereign Hand Of God

Romans 11:33
Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

God's ways are *"past finding out"* or beyond human understanding. The sovereign hand of God has been and continues to make its way through the course of human history, often in ways that seem so insignificant and obscure. Often, the work of God appears very mundane, very ordinary, and yet they are no less the handiwork of God than the work of spectacular miracles. The same God who brought forth water out of a rock in an instant when Moses struck it with His rod, also worked through Bezalel and his co-workers as they labored day after day in the construction of the Tabernacle in the wilderness (Exodus 31:1-11). To the human mind, it seems difficult to accept that the hard, laborious work of Bezalel and his team of artisans was the working of God Himself. Yet, it was the Spirit of God who filled these artisans with wisdom, understanding, and knowledge to design artistic works in gold, silver, and bronze for the Tabernacle.

By an extension of this simple illustration, we can say confidently that God has been working out His divine purposes through the lives of ordinary people. So, it was with the compilation of the 66 books of the Christian Bible. The sovereign hand of God was at work even in the process of assembling and the canonization of the Scriptures. The human mind may question the validity of such a claim. But to those of us who understand that God carries out His work silently, even as man goes about his daily business, this is a settled fact!

Even Above His Name

Psalm 138:2
I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

God has given His Word a place of greater prominence than His name. He has exalted His Word above His name. To God, His Word, which He has spoken, is of greater importance than His reputation. Because His name—His reputation—is only as good as His Word! We need to get an understanding of this. His reputation depends on His Word. His name derives its glory and honor from His Word. There are two important implications. First, on God's part, because He has exalted His Word above His name, He will uphold His Word with all that He is. God's Word is backed by the omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience of God Himself. He said, "*I am alert and active, watching over My word to perform it*" (Jeremiah 1:12, The Amplified Bible). Second, on our part, we need to realize the importance of not only knowing the name of the Lord,

but also His Word. We have called upon His name and have been saved (Romans 10:13). Now we need to continue to know His Word because God Himself has given His Word a place of greater honor than His name.

God's Word Is As Strong As His Character

Hebrews 6:11–18
11 And we desire that each of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,
12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself,
14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."
15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.
16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.
17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath,
18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us."

When God made a promise to Abraham, He backed His promise by swearing by Himself. He said, "*I will bless you*" and "*I will multiply you.*" God gave to Abraham "*two immutable things*"—His promise (Word) and His oath. Whenever God says, "*I will ...*" He is giving us two unchangeable things—His promise (His Word) and His oath (vow, pledge) to back up that promise. Every Word (promise) of God is a sworn statement and a word of honor because it is both a promise and an oath. "*He swore by Himself.*" God's oath of confirmation is based on His own Self. There is nothing else as immutable as His own Self because He is a God whose character is unchangeable. He said, "*For I am the LORD, I do not change*" (Malachi 3:6a). Therefore, every Word of God is backed up by God's unchangeable character. And one vital aspect of God's character is that it is impossible for God to lie.

He is the "*God, who cannot lie*" (Titus 1:2a). Every Word that He speaks is truth. As Jesus said, "*Your word is truth*" (John 17:17b). We need to come to a place where we rest on this aspect of God's unchangeable character. We know that He can never lie and therefore every Word that He has spoken is absolute truth. "*God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*" (Numbers 23:19). When we are assured of this, then as the Scripture says, we have "*strong consolation*" or as the Amplified Bible renders it, we have "*mighty indwelling strength and strong encouragement*" (Hebrews 6:18).

Pure Words

Psalm 12:6
The words of the LORD are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.

Our God is the God of truth. His Words are true words, pure words. God's Word is without error. "*The entirety of Your Word is truth*" (Psalm 119:160a). "*There has not failed one Word of all His good promise …*" (1 Kings 8:56b). They can be relied upon with strong confidence. His promises can be believed unreservedly, His instructions received wholeheartedly. God's Word stands firm forever in heaven (Psalm 119:89). They will not be altered or changed, for He will never break His covenant or recant what He has spoken (Psalm 89:34). His Word endures forever (1 Peter 1:23). His Word is a place of strong security because there is nothing else as pure, as sure, and as enduring.

God's Word Is A Carrier Of God's Power

Hebrews 11:3
By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Hebrews 1:3a
Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power.

Hebrews 4:12
For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

The Bible teaches us that God simply spoke this universe into existence. Believing this is much more reasonable than believing that things just fell together in place, over time, as proponents of the "Big Bang" and other theories claim. We understand that "*the worlds were framed by the Word of God*." This universe was formed, constructed, shaped, and fashioned by the Words that God spoke. "*Things which are seen were not made of things which are visible*"—that is, the visible was made of things that are invisible (Hebrews 11:3). The natural came out of the spiritual. This is a powerful truth, which we need to grasp. The Word of God was the invisible, spiritual material that brought into existence the visible natural world. Not only were all things created by the spoken Word of God but according to Hebrews 1:3 all things are upheld by the Word. The entire universe is sustained, regulated, and kept in order by the Word of God.

We understand this truth, when we recognize that the Word of God is full of the power of God. In physics, one of the theories of the nature of light explains that light consists

of photons. Photons are energy-packets. When these photons impinge on suitable targets, they release some of their energy. In a similar way, we can picture in our minds, the Word of God as energy-packets, carrying in them the omnipotent power of the Almighty God. The Word of God releases this divine energy and causes the creative works of God to take place.

If God brought this entire universe into existence by the power of His Word, then is He not able to bring into existence in our lives, things that do not exist at present? Where there is sickness, God can bring healing and health into existence by the power of His Word. Where there is need, by the power of His Word, God can bring provision and supply into existence. The creative power of God resides in His Word. Therefore, the Word of God can create (bring into existence) things that God has promised, even though they may not exist in our lives at present.

God used His Word to form, construct, and shape this universe. Can't God by His Word form, construct, and shape our present and future? There is power in the Word of God to change our present and shape our future.

This entire universe is sustained, upheld, and regulated by the Word of God. Can't the Word of God sustain, uphold, and regulate our lives also? God's Word carries enough and more power to sustain, regulate, and keep in order, the things concerning our lives here on earth.

Standing On The Promises

Romans 4:18, AMPC
[For Abraham, human reason for] hope being gone, hoped in faith that he should become … as he had been promised …

Understanding the purity and power of the Word gives us strong confidence to rely on it. The Word of God is truth and so we can expect to have what we are promised in the Word. The Word of God is full of power and so we can be confident that His Word will produce in our lives. Even if it means that, like Abraham, against all reason for hope, we still hope in faith that we will become all that God said we would become. We do this because we have understood the purity and power of God's Word. We know that His Word cannot fail.

Some of us may be facing tough times, financially. We wonder if things will ever change when it comes to our daily needs. God has promised that all our material needs will be met. We know that He has promised to "*…supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 4:19). We know that as we "*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness*," all things that we need for our life here on earth will be

given to us (Matthew 6:33). We know that as we honor God with what we have, He will cause us to increase (Proverbs 3:9-10; Malachi 3:9-11). Knowing that each of these promises is pure and full of divine power, we hold on to them in faith. We know that there is enough power in these Words (promises) to cause creative miracles of financial blessings to be released into our lives and change our circumstances. We continue to stand on His promises.

Some may be looking to God for their future. Even when things seem unclear, unsure, perhaps even hopeless, and bleak, the Word of God brings confidence and assurance into our lives. The Word says, all things work together for the good of those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). God knows the plans He has for us, plans of great prosperity, and plans to bring about the future we are hoping for (Jeremiah 29:11). Our path is like the shining light that shines brighter and brighter (Proverbs 4:18). Therefore, we expect things to get clearer. We know that our steps are ordered by the Lord (Psalm 37:23-24). These and many other Scriptures fill us with undaunted courage and confidence. We continue standing on His promises.

In a similar way, for different areas of our lives, we recognize the promises and commandments of the Lord. We acknowledge that His Word, concerning all areas of our lives, is pure and full of power.

Having understood the unlimited power that is in the Word and the possibility of it being released in our lives, what must we do to experience the power of God's Word in our lives? What is it that releases the inherent power of God's Word in the life of a believer? We will consider these in the following chapters.

3. God's Word: The Miracle Seed

The Lord Jesus often taught using parables. Parables are stories or illustrations from our world that help us understand truth about God's Kingdom. Parables teach us how God's Kingdom operates.

One of the parables that many of us are familiar with is the parable of the sower, recorded for us in three Gospels (Matthew 13:1-9,18-23; Mark 4:1-10,13-20; Luke 8:4-8,9-15). Let us read through Mark's record of this parable and we will draw insights from the text in all three Gospels.

The Parable of The Sower

Mark 4:1–10,13–20
1 And again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat in it on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea.
2 Then He taught them many things by parables, and said to them in His teaching:
3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow.
4 And it happened, as he sowed, that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.
5 Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.
6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away.
7 And some seed fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no crop.
8 But other seed fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."
9 And He said to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"
10 But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.
13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?
14 The sower sows the word.
15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.
16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;
17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.
18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,
19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.

The parable of the sower is simple and easy to understand, especially to those who are familiar, either through reading or experience, with the process of sowing seed and nurturing plants or crops. The Lord uses this simple parable to convey deep and powerful truths about the operation of God's Word in our lives. We know that the Word of God is alive, active, and full of God's power (Hebrews 4:12). This parable reveals to us how the life and power in the Word of God can be released into our lives. It also reveals things that hinder the Word of God from producing.

This parable is key to understanding all other parables. Jesus said: *"Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?"* (Mark 4:13). This means two important things: First, if we learn how to draw spiritual truth and insights from this parable, we will be able to do the same from all the other parables. Second, truths revealed in this parable are keys that enables us to understand and walk in truths contained and revealed in all the other parables of Jesus.

Let us highlight key thoughts presented to us in the parable of the sower. In presenting this summary, we draw from the parallel passages in the three Gospels.

1) God's Word is like seed (Mark 4:14).
2) Our heart is the ground where the seed of God's Word is to be sown (Mark 4:15).
3) The seed must be protected and nurtured if it is to produce fruit.
4) We must understand the Word (get an understanding of the spiritual truth) to keep satan from stealing the Word (Matthew 13:19).
5) Regardless of what hardship or persecution we face—from the world or the devil—we must hold fast to the Word and allow it to take root in our hearts, so that it can produce (Mark 4:16-17).
6) We must guard our hearts from things that can choke the Word: cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, desire for other things, and the pleasures of life (Mark 4:19).
7) When we understand (Matthew 13:23), receive (Mark 4:20) and retain (Luke 8:15) the Word in our hearts, we will bear fruit in our lives.

We will elaborate on each of these key insights, giving special attention to the process involved of sowing the seed of God's Word into our hearts through meditation in God's Word.

4. THE SEED IS THE WORD OF GOD

Luke 8:11
Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

1 Peter 1:23
Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

The first truth we see in this parable is that God's Word is like seed. When you hold a seed in your hand it appears so insignificant and lifeless. We cannot imagine that a small seed when sown into the ground would germinate, take root, and eventually grow into a plant or even a huge tree. The seed has within it the capacity to generate a whole new plant or tree. There is in a sense, creative ability in a seed because it gives rise to something that never existed before. Further, if the seed remains by itself, say in a seed-bag or in the storeroom, it is unable to release its ability. The power resident in the seed is released only when it is sown and properly nurtured.

Each Word that God has spoken to us is a seed. The Bible is a seed-bag or a storeroom full of seeds. We can refer to each Word or promise of God as a miracle seed. There is creative power in these seeds, which God has given to us. When these seeds of God's Word are sown and nurtured in our hearts, they will release in our lives the supernatural power they contain.

In 1 Peter 1:23, the Word of God is referred to as "*the incorruptible seed*." The Greek word used is '*spora*.' God's Word is the miracle '*spora*'—the miracle seed. The underlying principle is this: God's Word has within it the ability to produce. It has within it life-giving, creative, miracle-working power. Each Word that God has spoken is a miracle seed with the ability to create.

1 Peter 1:23 states that we were born again by the Word of God. James 1:18 reiterates this stating that we were born again by "*the word of truth.*" When the seed of God's Word (the Gospel) was sown into our hearts and when we believed it, it released its life-giving power into us. In an instant, in a moment of time, we were born again. We became new creatures. "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). A creative work of God took place in our spirits (Ephesians 2:10). This creative work that was accomplished in us (and is being accomplished in the hearts of many who are being saved) is the greatest miracle that we experience. This is the miracle of the new birth—

of becoming a new creation in Christ. And this creative miracle was brought about by the power of the incorruptible seed (the Gospel), that is, the Word of God.

Just consider how mighty a work it was for us to be made new creatures in Christ. Satan's power was broken off our lives. We were translated out of satan's dominion into the Kingdom of God's own Son (Colossians 1:13). We were adopted into God's family. We were born of God and made partakers of the divine nature. We were brought into Christ and all the wonderful blessings of being in Christ became ours. All this and much more became ours in an instant when the seed of the Word of God released its miracle power into our lives.

Has the seed of God's Word lost any of its power or ability to work in us? Are the miracle seeds of the Word unable to cause any more miracles in our lives? No, not at all! For the Word is the incorruptible seed. The Word lives, abides and endures forever. Every Word that God has spoken to us has the potential to produce in our lives.

God's Word Has Been Designed To Produce

Isaiah 55:10-11
10 For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
11 so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

God said that the Word that goes forth out of His mouth will not return to Him empty. Rather it will accomplish that which He pleases and purposes. There are four simple insights we draw from Isaiah 55:10-11:

1) God's Word has been designed to produce (or designed to accomplish).
2) God's Word will accomplish that which God pleases and what He has purposed.
3) When God wants to accomplish His purpose and pleasure, He speaks forth His Word.
4) God's Word reveals God's purpose and pleasure.

The Words that God speaks (and the Words that He has spoken) are not empty words. They are words full of the omnipotence of God Himself. They have been designed to produce. Like a seed, every Word that God has spoken is packed with supernatural ability to bring about its fulfilment.

God has designed His Word to produce that which He pleases and that which He has purposed here on earth. Because God has purposed to bless His people (Psalm 3:8), His Word will accomplish just that. God has purposed to heal people (Exodus 15:26; Exodus 23:25). Therefore, His Word will bring healing to the sick (Psalm 107:20). God has

purposed that His people receive wisdom, understanding, and direction for their lives (Isaiah 48:17; Psalm 32:8) and therefore, His Word will fulfil this purpose of His. His Word will accomplish everything He has purposed, planned, intended, and desired.

The Lord God is in heaven. And when He desires to carry out His purpose and pleasure here on earth, He releases His Word. This spoken Word is a miracle seed. It will accomplish God's intent. We, His people are here on earth. Through the power of His incorruptible Word, and the working of His Spirit, God accomplishes that which He pleases and purposes in our lives.

The Word Works Effectively In You Who Believe

1 Thessalonians 2:13
For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

God has designed His Word to be a carrier of His power into human lives. The apostle Paul writing to the Thessalonians explains that the Word of God releases its divine energy and works effectively in the lives of those who believe it. The words "*effectively works*" is the Greek '*energeō*' which denotes divine energy or supernatural power released from within which is mighty in working. The Amplified Bible includes this parenthetical note: "*[exercising its inherent, supernatural power in those of faith]*." God's Word release the supernatural power of God into our lives when we receive it and believe it.

Every Word of God contained in the Scriptures is a miracle seed with the ability to produce the things of God in the life of every believer. Since every seed produces according to its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12), each Word from God will produce what it is designed to produce. God's Word concerning healing will produce healing. God's Word concerning blessing and prosperity will produce blessing and prosperity. God's Word concerning each area of life will produce in that very area of our lives.

In stating this fact about the seed of the Word, we must remind you that there is also the principle of hearing and obeying the Word of God in its entirety—not just selected portions of Scripture. Life, health, blessing, and total well-being are promised to those who listen and obey the whole counsel of God (Proverbs 3:1-2,7-8; Proverbs 4:20-22).

5. THE SEED MUST BE SOWN INTO THE HEART

The Soil Of The Heart

Mark 4:14-15
14 The sower sows the word.
15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

In all three Gospel records of the parable of the sower, it clearly states that the seed of the Word was sown in the heart (Matthew 13:19; Mark 4:15; Luke 8:12). The heart is the ground where the seed of God's Word is to be sown.

According to Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, the heart represents the seat of moral nature and spiritual life, the seat of grief, desires, affections, perceptions, thoughts, understanding, reasoning powers, imagination, intentions, purpose, will, and faith. The heart is used in the Old Testament with reference to the moral person of the individual, includes the emotions, reason, and will. While the New Testament differentiates between the spirit (*'pneuma'*) and soul (*'psuche'*), the word heart is often used in an overarching sense to include both spirit and soul (Hebrews 4:12). The heart represents the inner person, the hidden man (1 Peter 3:4) or the real man. So, the Word being sown into the heart, therefore means, that the Word must be received in the inner person, the spirit and soul of the individual, the core of the person. The Word must be received in the realm of our faith, believing, desires, affections, perceptions, thoughts, understanding, reasoning, imagination, intentions, purposes and will.

The Implanted Word

James 1:21
Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

The word implanted in James 1:21 has the idea of a seed rooting itself, becoming ingrown, inborn, rooted within the ground. The Word like a seed in the ground, works in the heart. It goes into the soil of the heart, takes root, and then springs up affecting the soul. This once again emphasizes the truth that the Word must be received into the inner person and allowed to go through the process of being implanted and deeply rooted within.

In Your Heart

Proverbs 4:20-23
20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.
21 Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart;
22 For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

The truth of receiving the Word of God into our hearts is not just a New Testament revelation. We see instances in the Old Testament when God instructed His people to lay up His Word in their hearts. *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart"* (Deuteronomy 6:6; see also Deuteronomy 11:18). The Psalmist stated: *"Your word I have hidden in my heart"* (Psalm 119:11a).

The passage in Proverbs 4:20-23 is a powerful call to give God's Word its rightful place in our hearts.

Pay attention to my words—Above all that clamors for our attention, we intentionally choose to give careful attention to God's Word. In every situation we choose to start with what God's Word says about the matter. We make God's Word top priority. That is giving God's Word attention.

Incline your ear to my sayings—We lean over to God's side and listen to what He has to say, while numerous other voices express their opinions. We tune in to God's Word and cut off distracting voices.

Let them not depart from your eyes—We focus our constant gaze on God's Word. We paint pictures of God's Word on our mind's eye. We "see" the Word. We allow God's Word to fill our imagination.

Keep them in your heart—The goal is to eventually have a rich deposit of God's Word in our hearts, filling our inner most person, pervading all our thoughts, intentions, passions, and reasoning.

The outcome will be life and health administered to us through the Word.

Having His Word fill our hearts is so important, because the heart is the source, the well-spring of what happens in our lives. If the Word fills our hearts, then the Word releases its life and power into our lives. Thus, our lives become influenced, shaped, and fashioned by the power of God's Word.

The Word Is Near You

Deuteronomy 30:11–14
11 For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off.
12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?'
13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?'
14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

The Word is always "very near" us if we have endeavored to lay up His Word in our hearts. The heart is like a big repository where we can store the Word of God. What fills the heart comes out of the mouth. When the Word fills our hearts and mouths, we will never speak hopelessness and despair. Our speech would not communicate hopelessness as though God and His Word were distant, up in heaven or far across the seas. When the Word fills our hearts and mouths, we will live according to it, we will do it. What is so interesting is that the apostle Paul quotes this passage from Deuteronomy 31:11-14 in Romans 10:6-8, addressing this to us New Testament believers. Hence the underlying truth of having God's Word in our hearts and mouths is something we New Testament believers must practice as well.

Through Meditation

The big question then is how do we get a rich deposit of the seed of God's Word into our hearts? In the parable of the sower, the sower sowing seed is paralleled to hearing the Word. And we know that in addition to the seed being sown it must get into the ground and germinate. Similarly, we see that the Word must be implanted into our hearts. How do we make this happen?

Although not stated in the parable of the sower, if we remain consistent with the teaching of Scripture, we discover that this is possible through the practice of meditation in God's Word.

Meditation in God's Word is the process by which we lay up a rich deposit of the Word in our hearts. We hear and receive the Word so that the Word gets implanted in us, is nurtured, and can bear fruit in our lives.

When we discipline ourselves to meditate in the Word and lay up His Word in our hearts, then we have ready access to His Word anywhere, at any time. We can draw out of the deposit of the Word in our hearts by the words of our mouths. We speak out what we have put in there. When the Word occupies our mouths and our hearts, it becomes near to us. And in a cyclic manner, this enables us to meditate in the Word of

God almost anywhere and at any time. Ideally, we would desire a quiet place away from disturbance where we can sit and meditate with the Bible open before us. However, if we have laid up His Word in our hearts, then we are also able to meditate in the Word anywhere, even while walking down a busy street or driving along the highway.

In the next chapter we take a deep dive into the biblical process of meditating in God’s Word.

6. MEDITATING IN GOD'S WORD

In earlier chapters, we have emphasized that the Word of God is the source and foundation of our faith. We examined the purity and power of God's Word. We presented the fact that the Word of God is full of the power of God and that this power can be released into our lives. We have also understood the fact that the Word of God is like a seed, which when sown and nurtured in our hearts, will release its transforming power into our lives. We now take a step further to explore the discipline of meditation in God's Word. Meditation is the process by which we sow and nurture the seed of God's Word in our hearts.

Usually, when we mention the word "meditation", people generally think of some mystical practice for ascetics. Perhaps, it is because of this the Church in general does not emphasize the practice of meditation. While it is true that many cultures, from around the world, have their own variations to the process of meditation, our goal is to present a scriptural approach to meditation. As believers we must understand its importance and develop this discipline in our walk of faith.

Meditation—A Scriptural Discipline

Genesis 24:63a
And Isaac went out to meditate in the field in the evening.

The earliest mention of the word "meditate" in the Bible is in connection with Isaac, in the book of Genesis. Although not highly informative of how or what he was meditating on, it is interesting to note that meditation was practiced in Scripture, in early times. Also, Isaac went out into the field to meditate, which tells us that normally one would like to cut out all distractions and interference, to create the right atmosphere for meditation.

Joshua 1:8
This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

A well-known verse concerning meditation is Joshua 1:8. The Lord had given the Law through His servant Moses to His people Israel. Moses had impressed upon the people of Israel how privileged they were to have the Laws of God given to them. For instance, consider these words that Moses spoke to Israel:

Deuteronomy 4:5-8
5 Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess.
6 Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.'
7 For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?
8 And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

In addition to this, the Lord constantly reminded His people that He desired for them to lay up His Word within their hearts and to continually obey them. Time and again, we read statements such as: *"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart"* (Deuteronomy 6:6) and *"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul*" (Deuteronomy 11:18a). The same instruction was being repeated to Joshua, who was now in charge of the leadership of Israel. The Lord was commissioning Joshua, telling him to be strong and very courageous and to carefully observe all the Law that was given through Moses (Joshua 1:7). The Lord then presented to Joshua a discipline that he could use to get the Word into his heart and carefully observe them. The Lord told Joshua, "*This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it*" (Joshua 1:8a).

It is interesting to note that it was God who was instructing Joshua to meditate in His Word day and night. Meditation in the Word is therefore a discipline that is instructed and encouraged by God Himself. It is a discipline that God wants us to practice.

Notice the process:
1) The words of the Book of the Law were to be a part of his speech *("This Book of the Law shall not depart out of your mouth"*).
2) He was to continually meditate in the Word *("You shall meditate in it day and night"*).

Meditation is a discipline given to us in Scripture that helps us deposit God's Word in our hearts (spirit) and souls (mind). There are numerous other references to meditation, especially in the Psalms. Psalm 1 is a well-known passage of Scripture that teaches us about the disciplines of a righteous man. It tells us that such a man does not walk in ungodly counsel, does not follow the paths of sinners, and does not share in the activity of scorners. *"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night"* (Psalm 1:2). His disciplines of righteousness and constant meditation in the Word enable him to be fruitful, thriving, and prosperous in all that he does (Psalm 1:3).

Scriptural meditation is not limited to meditating in God's Word. We find other subjects or themes upon which we may meditate. For instance, we could meditate on the Lord Himself. The Lord, His character, and His attributes become the focus of our meditation. David, the sweet psalmist of Israel said: *"When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches"* (Psalm 63:6). Another psalmist wrote: *"My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the LORD"* (Psalm 104:34, King James Version [KJV]).

We may also meditate on the wonderful things that the Lord has done in our lives. David said: *"I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands"* (Psalm 143:5). Asaph, another of Israel's psalmists wrote, *"I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds"* (Psalm 77:12). We may also ponder and meditate upon matters of wisdom and understanding. The Psalmist wrote, *"Hear this, all ye people; give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world: both low and high, rich and poor, together. My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding"* (Psalm 49:1-3, KJV).

Meditation—The Biblical Approach

Having understood the fact that meditation is a scriptural practice and is indeed encouraged by God Himself, and that this is the method by which we are able to lay up God's Word in our hearts, our next objective is to learn how to meditate.

There are two main Hebrew words used for the word "meditate" in the Old Testament. The Hebrew word *'hagah'* means "to reflect, imagine, ponder, moan, growl, mutter, murmur, to make a quiet sound such as sighing, to contemplate something as one repeats the words." The other Hebrew word *'siyach'* used mainly in Psalm 119, once again means "to ponder, i.e., converse (with oneself, and hence aloud), utter, commune, complain, declare, muse, pray, speak, talk." The Spirit-Filled Life Bible carries the following comments on the first word. It says: "*Hagah represents something quite unlike the English "meditation," which may be a mental exercise only. In Hebrew thought, to meditate upon the Scriptures is to quietly repeat them in a soft, droning sound, while utterly abandoning outside distractions. From this tradition comes a specialized type of Jewish prayer called "davening," that is, reciting texts, praying intense prayers, or getting lost in communion with God while bowing or rocking back and forth. Evidently this dynamic form of meditation-prayer goes back to David's time*" (Pages 753–754, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1991).

Meditation is essentially an activity of the human spirit that reaches the soul (the seat of thought, intellect, imagination, feeling, and will) and affects the physical body. For the purposes of instruction, we would like to summarize the process of meditation by using three words—contemplation, visualization, and confession. At any given time, while

meditating, one may be involved in any one or more of these three processes. One may be in deep contemplation about a particular theme, or may both contemplate and visualize a specific subject, or be involved in confession. Let us consider each of these in detail.

Contemplation—Thinking Within Yourself

Psalm 143:5
I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Your works; I muse on the work of Your hands.

This aspect of meditation engages our thought and intellect. We muse, ponder, and think deeply about a particular subject. For instance, if we are contemplating on a particular subject from the Word, say on divine healing, and we have chosen Isaiah 53:4 as the verse of Scripture, during contemplation we consider the meaning of this verse, its significance, and its implications. We recognize that Jesus bore all our sicknesses and carried all our pains. He did it as our Substitute and, therefore, we no longer need to bear them. We understand and reason within ourselves. We think through its application in our daily life. We examine wrong notions and ideas we may have had before and begin to disregard them.

We believe that the Spirit of God delights in us spending time in deep contemplation in the Word. Often, when we have set ourselves apart from all outside distractions and have put our minds' attention on the Word, in contemplation, the Spirit of the Lord gently bears us along in our thought process. He inspires and directs our thoughts by planting fresh ideas and insights into our minds. In describing how the men of old were inspired to bring forth the Scriptures, apostle Peter said: *"for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:21). That word *"moved"* comes from the Greek word *'phero'* that means "to bear along, to carry." The Vine's Dictionary has the following comments about these Old Testament prophets. It says, *"They were 'borne along,' or impelled, by the Holy Spirit's power, not acting according to their own wills, or simply exercising their own thoughts, but expressing the mind of God in words provided and ministered by Him"* (Page 420, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985).

The prophets spoke of things beyond their own understanding, so much so that they had to search *"what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow"* (1 Peter 1:11). In a similar manner, the Holy Spirit bears us along in our thinking during our time of contemplation in the Word. The Holy Spirit is our Teacher. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit will speak to us the things He hears Jesus speak (John 16:12–15). This often happens when we have set ourselves apart from all distractions to contemplate in the Word. Oh! This is such a tremendous experience, when the *"hand of*

the Lord" who is the sweet Holy Spirit, gently descends on us and begins to bear us along in our thinking, as we are in deep contemplation in the Word. Often, the presence of the Lord becomes so strong, that tears of joy and thanksgiving begin to flow at the amazing revelation and understanding that He imparts.

Contemplation influences our thinking. It produces a mind that is renewed by the Word of God. The Scriptures teach us about the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:2a). We are instructed to be renewed in the spirit (attitude) of our minds (Ephesians 4:23). A person with a mind that is renewed to the whole counsel of God (all of the Word of God) is able to *"prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God"* (Romans 12:2b). Through the disciplined practice of meditation/contemplation in the Word of God, we have our *"senses exercised to discern both good and evil"* (Hebrews 5:14b).

Visualization—Painting With Your Imagination

Genesis 15:1–6
1 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."
2 But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"
3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"
4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."
5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."
6 And he believed in the LORD and He accounted it to him for righteousness."

Several years had elapsed since the time God first promised to make Abram the father of a great nation. Sarah and Abram were still childless, and this obviously was a matter of concern to them. During this time, the Lord spoke to Abram to reassure him of the original promise. Notice carefully what the Lord did. The Lord led Abram outside his house one night, instructed him to look up into the starry sky and asked if he was able to number the stars. He then told Abram, *"So shall your descendants be."* In effect, God was giving Abram a visual or a picture of His promise. Abram was able to see this picture repeatedly with his imagination what the fulfilment of God's promise would look like. Later, the Lord also said to Abraham, *" … I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore ..."* (Genesis 22:17).

Visualization is an important process that we practice in meditation. We see with the power of our imagination, what the Word of God is conveying to us. For instance, if we are sick, we see ourselves up and well. We see ourselves being and doing all that the Word says about us. Visualization in the process of meditation engages our imagination.

The Church, in general has neglected to harness the power of the imagination. The world on the other hand constantly influences our imagination through media commercials, printed advertisements, and so on. Imagination is an important part of our being. God designed it and gave us this faculty to use. Our imagination influences our behavior and the decisions we make. They influence our perspective of life and determine our self-esteem. Many people suffer from a poor self-image (or a poor self "imagination") or a self-image that has bound them with fear of people, fear of the unknown, fear of taking risks, or a self-image that fills them with a sense of inferiority, and so on. However, when we meditate in the Word of God and begin to visualize (or imagine) ourselves as who God says we are, our self-image begins to change. In fact, not only our self-image but our whole perspective of life and the circumstances around us begin to change.

There is a familiar Old Testament incident found in Numbers 13 that serves as a good illustration here. The Lord had led His people out of bondage from Egypt with the promise to give them the land of Canaan as an inheritance. In preparation to enter the Promised Land, the Lord directed Moses to send 12 men, each one a leader from the 12 tribes, to spy the Land. The 12 men spent 40 days searching the Land. They then returned and presented their report. All of them agreed that the Land was fruitful and flourishing. However, 10 of them were afraid of the giants who lived in the Land. They said, *"We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we…The land through which we have gone as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great stature. There we saw the giants … and we were like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight"* (Numbers 13:31–33). Only two of them brought a positive report and said, *"Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it"* (Numbers 13:30b). All these 12 men must have seen the same giants, but the way they reacted was different. Two of them were confident because they remembered that the Lord was with them (Numbers 14:6–9). The other 10 let their negative imagination get the better of them. It was what they saw with their mind's eye that weakened them. They pictured themselves to be like tiny grasshoppers before the giants. This filled them with fear and even robbed them of their confidence in God. Sad to say, many Christians go through circumstances of life like these 10 men. What they see with their mind's eye—their imagination—hinders them from living a life of faith and enjoying the rich blessings of the Lord. However, through the discipline of meditation, we can paint fresh pictures on the walls of our imagination.

It is interesting to note that in many places in Scripture, especially the Old Testament, God deals with what we see. He gave His covenant people an ordinance in the Old Testament saying, *"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes"* (Deuteronomy 11:18; See also Deuteronomy 6:8; Exodus 13:9,16). At one

point, the people practiced this by tying portions of Scripture to their left hand and around their foreheads. One of the meanings of the word "sign" is "visible illustration." God wanted His people to have a visible reminder of His Word and what He had done for them. God wanted to influence what they saw, because what they saw would trigger their memories to recollect the works of the Lord. While we do not have such a practice in the New Testament, we personally feel that we should have the Word of God painted on the walls of our imaginations, so that we can constantly "see" and be reminded of God's rich promises. In a familiar Old Testament passage, the Lord says, *"My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes"* (Proverbs 4:20-21a). Once again, we find an instruction that deals with the importance of constantly "seeing" the Word. We believe that in one sense, this deals with what we imagine, visualize and picture in our minds.

Confession—Saying What God Has Said

Joshua 1:8
This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Here, the Lord was instructing Joshua to meditate *"day and night."* Notice that He began by saying, *"This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth."* In other words, the Lord was telling Joshua that the Words contained in the Book of the Law were to be part of his speech continually. Therefore, as a part of the process of meditation, we are to let the Words of Scripture be in our mouths, that is, we are to speak/repeat/recite Words of Scripture. As explained earlier, this was the practice of the Hebrew people. During meditation, they quietly repeated Scripture texts in a soft, droning sound, while bowing or rocking back and forth, utterly abandoning outside distractions.

In the New Testament, we are introduced to the words "confess" and "confession." These are important words in the Christian faith. Salvation becomes real when we confess with our mouths the Lord Jesus and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead (Romans 10:9). Further, the New Testament teaches us about the confession of our sins (1 John 1:9) and about the confession of our faith (Hebrews 3:1). Of the two Greek words that are translated "confess" or "confession," the word *'homologeo'* is commonly used and it literally means, "to speak the same thing, to assent, accord, agree with." We chose to use the word "confession" to describe this third aspect of meditation because when the Lord instructs us to repeat/recite/speak His Word, in effect He is instructing us to "confess" His Word. He is telling us to "speak the same thing," to say what His Word says, to have our words "agree with" His Word.

To illustrate, let us say that we are meditating in the Word, specifically on the Scriptures found in Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17. These verses relate how Christ provided for our healing through His substitutionary work on the Cross. We CONTEMPLATE on what these verses mean and how they apply to us. We VISUALIZE these Scriptures as being true in our lives. We imagine and see ourselves free from sickness, healed of all pain, whole and perfectly healthy. As a part of our meditation, we CONFESS these verses. We say in a soft yet audible voice: "Surely He has borne my sicknesses and carried my pains. Jesus Himself took my infirmities and bore my sicknesses." We repeat these many times over. Or we may wish to speak to ourselves about what these Scriptures mean. In my own times of meditation, sometimes I may preach the Word to myself. At other times, I may confess Words of Scripture in prayer to God. For example, as we are meditating on these verses, we pray and say, "Father, I thank you for your Word. Thank you, Father, that according to these verses, Jesus surely bore my sicknesses and carried my pains. He took all my infirmities and bore my sicknesses. Thank you, Father, that I therefore need not bear sickness and disease in my body."

Confessing the Word in this manner has a tremendous effect on our lives. It reinforces the Word of God in our inner man. Our faith is built up because faith comes through hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). When we confess the Word in this manner, we are in effect hearing the Word. The consistent practice of confessing the Word will surely change the way we speak. In fact, when the Lord instructs us to keep His Word in our mouths continually, it implies that anything that contradicts what His Word says should not be a part of our speech.

Encountering And Communing With God Through Meditation In His Word

Psalm 63:1–6
1 O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water.
2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see your power and Your glory.
3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.
5 My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.
6 When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches.

Scriptural meditation is primarily a time of close communion with the Lord. The Psalmist, in the passage quoted above, expresses his intense longing for God. His desire for God moved him to seek God in the sanctuary and prompted him to praise God with uplifted hands and joyful lips. It moved him to meditate in the Lord through the quietness of the night. Similarly, out of the intense longing of our hearts for intimacy with God, we allow our thoughts and speech to be focused entirely on the Lord. As we move into deep meditation in the Word, we move away from simply analyzing the Word with our intellect, to a time where we encounter and commune with God. It becomes

the Word that God is speaking to us directly in the present time. His still small voice becomes loud and clear in the silence of the moment. The presence of God overwhelms us. It becomes a time where the Lord does a work deep within us, changing us in our inner being through His energized Word. During this time, we can respond to what the Lord speaks and does in our hearts. We can express repentance, faith, joy, praise, and gratitude to the Lord, based on His Word. Either through deep inner prayers, or whispered words, or strongly affirmed confessions, we release our thoughts, feelings, desires, and convictions to the Lord. Revelation of truth begins to well up inside us. Our spiritual eyes are opened to see and understand mysteries of His Kingdom. Truth is reinforced and consolidated in our inner person. Lies, deceptions, and strongholds in our minds are pulled down. It is a time of personal intimate encounter and sweet communion with the Lord as we meditate in His holy Word.

The Effects Of Meditation

2 Corinthians 10:3-5
3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh.
4 For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,
5 casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

A number of the challenges that believers contend with are listed in the Scriptures above. These are *"strongholds," "arguments," "every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God"* and *"every thought."* All these have to do with the believer's mind. The mind is a battlefield. And God has given us weapons to wage a successful warfare, so that we can experience victory in each of these areas of conflict. The problem, however, is that many people who become believers, still continue on with strongholds, imaginations, reasoning, and thoughts that are opposed to the knowledge of God (as given to us in the written Word of God). Consequently, many remain defeated and in bondage in many areas of their lives.

Meditation in the Word, although not a cure-all, is an important discipline that helps us in dealing with these challenges in the mind. Strongholds can be pulled down through the disciplined practice of meditation in the Word. A person who has been meditating in the Word of God will find it easier to bring imaginations, reasoning, and thoughts, captive to the knowledge of God (the Word of God).

Consistent meditation in the Word results in a renewed mind, renewed speech, and renewed faith. Our thought patterns, our self- image, our self-esteem, and other aspects of our personhood that depend on the condition of our minds, begin to change. We become positive, confident, and hopeful about life and our future. We are lifted from being people without a vision to being bold and aggressive dreamers. We begin to speak

with a renewed vocabulary. Instead of being bound in conversations of poverty, defeat, and self-pity, we speak out of strong faith in God. The continued sowing and watering of the Word in our hearts through meditation, produces in us a vibrant faith in God.

The Fruits Of Meditation

Psalm 1:1–3
1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he does shall prosper.

God's Word is the miracle seed. It has the potential to produce. The seed of the Word when sown in our hearts will cause the good pleasure of God to be accomplished in our lives. It is through the process of meditation that we sow and nurture the seed of God's Word in our hearts. The seed will germinate and produce fruit in its due time. The consistent practice of meditation is, therefore, an important link in the process of making the promises of God a manifested reality.

Consider some of the fruits that the Word of God can produce in our lives. The Word is that incorruptible seed which along with the work of the Spirit causes the new birth in our lives (1 Peter 1:23). The Word is like medicine that can bring healing to every part of our body (Proverbs 4:20-22; Psalm 107:20). The entrance of God's Word brings insight, understanding and wisdom (Psalm 119:98-100,130). The Word causes prosperity and success (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:3). The Word causes spiritual growth and maturity (Acts 20:32). And then there are the many blessings of God that He has given to us in His Word. All of these can be produced in our lives if we will sow and nurture these seeds through meditation in the Word.

A man who lives a godly life and consistently meditates in the Word of God is like a well-watered tree. His roots are connected to a continual supply of nourishment and refreshing. This is what happens when we consistently meditate in the Word. The inner person is blessed with an endless supply of nourishment and refreshing. Our lives become fruitful and productive.

Developing The Discipline Of Meditation

A Daily Discipline

Psalm 119:97
Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

We want to encourage you to develop a daily discipline of meditation in God's Word. Let this be a habit, even a godly addiction. Meditating in the Word is a discipline, which implies that we do this even when we do not feel like it, or even if it may seem that we are too busy for it. On the other hand, we must do this out of pure delight in God's Word. We love the Lord and therefore we cherish His Word. This moves us into times where we give God's Word undivided attention through meditation.

In Times of Special Need

Psalm 119:23,24,78
23 Princes also sit and speak against me, but Your servant meditates on Your statues.
24 Your testimonies also are my delight and my counselors.
78 Let the proud be ashamed, for they treated me wrongfully with falsehood; but I will meditate on your precepts.

There have been and continues to be many times, when I am confronted with different struggles, challenges, questions, and concerns. In such times, in addition to praying in the Spirit, I attempt to meditate in Scriptures that address the challenge I am confronted with. My mind may be confused, full of questions and unsure. But I go to the Scriptures that reveal God's thoughts on the subject. I meditate on them. These bring peace, quietness, and assurance in my heart. Other times, I may be taking up a particular challenge and I know that I will have to draw additional strength and encouragement from the Lord. During such times, I once again turn to Scriptures that are relevant to the situation and meditate on them. The Scriptures become a source of confidence and strength. All of us can avail of such blessings.

A Purposeful Exercise

Psalm 119:148
My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your Word.

Meditation in the Word is not a meaningless exercise, neither is it only for the deeply spiritual. It is for all of us to practice. In a world (even the Christian world) that prefers quick fixes, and instant miracles, the subject of developing a spiritual discipline may not

be a popular one. We are, however, encouraged to exercise ourselves in spiritual things (1 Timothy 4:7). Exercise is a discipline. And there may be times when discipline (self-discipline) may not be an easy thing. It may even require some sacrifice. However, the rewards of discipline are rich and enduring. May you be one of those who will enjoy meditating in the Word and reap the rich rewards of doing so!

Practical Ideas

I now share some practical tips that can help us develop the discipline of meditating in the Word of God. These are not laws, or rules and we should not bring ourselves into bondage to some process, methodology or system. I am sharing things that I have found useful in my own life, something I started doing in my early teenage years. You may find these tips useful and something you can adapt to your own spiritual life. The Lord may give you other ideas on how you can practice meditating in His Word, which may suit you better.

I share three practical ideas:
1) Word Seeds
2) Daily Word Meditation Routine
3) Contemplative Bible Reading

Word Seeds

Early on in my spiritual journey, in my early teenage years, I learnt to categorize Scripture verses into themes or topics. This is just like the way books in a library are categorized and shelved. A sample of such topics/themes are listed in the last chapter in this book. When I wanted to meditate in God's Word on a specific topic or theme, I could easily recall and go through relevant Scriptures. So, if I felt I needed to meditate on the topic of faith, I would go through the Scriptures that I had collected on the topic of faith. This is like sowing seed. We understand in the natural realm, that we sow seed according to the harvest we desire because we know every seed produces after its own kind. Similarly, through meditating in Scriptures on specific topics or themes, we are sowing seed according to our need. This also aids the memorization process, because, when you meditate in these Scriptures repeatedly, they get imprinted into your memory.

I also use this when preparing to minister in a service geared toward a specific objective. While we desire to remain open to the demonstrations of the Holy Spirit through signs, wonders, miracles, and healings every time we minister the Word, we also have services that are specifically geared towards expecting supernatural demonstrations. We may

have Gospel Crusade meetings, special healing, and miracle services, and so on where the objective is to minister for people to receive miracles and healings. As part of preparation to minister in such services, in addition to praying much in tongues, I also take time to meditate in Scriptures on related topics such as: the anointing of the Spirit, authority of the believer, gifts of the Spirit, healing, the miracles of Jesus, faith, the prophetic, etc. This sharpens and tunes my spirit and gets me ready to minister.

Daily Word Meditation Routine

Athletes who train for a specific sport, usually have a weekly routine. They go through the same set of exercise routines repeatedly, each time pushing a bit further. In the early years of my spiritual journey I put together a daily Word meditation routine. I decided to meditate on specific topics/themes each day. I would use the Scriptures from Word Seeds that I had and go over them, doing a moment of meditation on each Scripture verse—reading it, confessing it, worshipping God with it. Subsequently I moved to something more spontaneous where I meditate on themes/topics as needed. You may wish to create a similar daily routine depending on what your current situations/needs are.

An example of a daily Word meditation routine that I used during a certain period:

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Prayer Generosity	Faith	Divine Health	Family	Wisdom & Understanding	Success & Prosperity	Ministry & Miracles

Contemplative Bible Reading

One of the practices that has helped me immensely throughout my spiritual journey is contemplative Bible reading. Many Bible reading plans focus on completing a certain number of chapters and books within a specific period. While this is good and has its advantages, I prefer taking my time in reading and meditating over what I am reading. So, my regular time in the Word is not about completing certain number of chapters but focuses on drawing out of the Word. So I read a few verses in a chapter, and spend time meditating on those few verses and encountering God, receiving revelation, internalizing it, and then moving on to the subsequent verses, when I feel like I need to move on. Often, I may spend a few days on the same set of verses, spending 30 minutes or more reading, contemplating, meditating, and encountering God through those verses. Very often the presence of God would overwhelm me, revelation will pour forth and I will write down things I am seeing and understanding. My life is transformed. And of course, many sermons have been birthed out of such times.

For instance, sometime in September 2019, I began re-reading the Gospel of Mark as part of my daily devotion. I read Mark 1:1 *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God,"* and I could not get past that one verse. I stayed on Mark 1:1 for four days, about 30 minutes or more each day, just engrossed, immersed in that verse. God's presence overwhelmed me each time I read that verse. The words *"the Son of God"* just stood out of the page. As I meditated on that part of Mark 1:1 in my imagination I journeyed back into eternity past, before the beginning of time to see the Eternal Word one with the Father and the Spirit, and then journeyed through time as we know it, to watch the Eternal Word unveil Himself as the Incarnate Word, the Son of God, and do what He did through His death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and exaltation. Related Scriptures seemed to be coming off the pages of the Bible. And to understand the truth that the Gospel we preach is the Gospel of this Son of God, was overwhelming. Those four days on Mark 1:1 was truly a rich experience of encountering the Son of God. I wrote down whatever I could. I held on to that Word in my spirit, letting it settle deep within. I finally preached it on Christmas day 2019 and it ministered to those present (sermon "The Son of God" available at apcwo.org/sermons).

May you be able to develop this practice and enjoy meditating in God's Word!

7. THE SEED MUST BE PROTECTED AND NURTURED

Satan Is After The Word

Matthew 13:19
When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Mark 4:14-15
14 The sower sows the word.
15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts.

Luke 8:11-12
11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.
12 Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

The parable of the sower give us an important spiritual insight—satan is after the Word. This shows how important it is to hear, receive, and nurture God's Word in our hearts! Satan knows that if we receive the Word it will produce in our lives and cause us to walk in victory, authority, and dominion. As the apostle John wrote in 1 John 2:14 *"….I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one."*

Hence in an effort to keep us from the Word of God, satan will invest his energies in trying to (A) prevent us from hearing the Word through disinterest, lethargy, preoccupation, busyness, distractions, etc., (B) prevent us from understanding it through confusions, lies, deceptions, etc., (C) prevent us from believing it through doubts, unbelief, fear, etc. However, since the Lord Jesus has exposed satan's strategies for us we can take countermeasures and ensure we do our part to make a rich deposit of God's Word in our hearts. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly!

Protect And Nurture The Seed

Another important insight we draw from the parable of the sower is that the seed must be protected and nurtured over time if it is to produce fruit. We understand this readily from our knowledge of gardening or farming.

The Lord Jesus highlighted two important areas where we will face threats that could keep the seed from producing or rob us of the harvest. He mentioned (A) persecutions and hardships against the Word and (B) cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, desire for other things, and the pleasures of life. We will look at both these sets of harvest blockers in separate chapters.

Another important aspect is nurturing the seed. In the natural we ensure the seed receives sufficient sunlight, water, and nutrients so that it can germinate, grow, and bear fruit. Similarly, we need to maintain a suitable environment in our hearts where the seed of the Word can be nurtured. The Word of God is also referred to as water (Ephesians 5:26) and light (Psalm 119:105). So, we nurture the seed of the Word by continually meditating in the Word (providing water and light), receiving continuous revelation (perhaps like nutrients), and walking filled with the Spirit (Colossians 3:15; Ephesians 5:18-19).

The Seed-Principle Of God's Kingdom

Mark 4:26–29
26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground,
27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.
28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.
29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.

Germination of the seed usually takes place beneath the soil. We know it is happening even though we do not see it. And it takes time. In time, we see signs of growth as the sprouts appear above the soil. And more time must go by, before the plant or tree can grow and produce fruit.

Right after the parable of the sower, the Lord Jesus spoke another parable, once again using the seed illustration, to teach us about the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:26-29). In this parable, the Lord Jesus revealed to us a general seed-principle that operates in God's Kingdom. This seed-principle is applicable to many different aspects of our life in the Kingdom of God. The seed-principle obviously also applies to the process by with God's Word—the miracle seed—produces in our lives.

The main insights about the seed-principle of God's Kingdom are:
1) The seed must be sown.
2) There is a passage of time before any signs of growth manifest.
3) The seed will produce, even if we do not know how.
4) When the harvest comes, we must put in the sickle and gather it in (in other words, we have a part to play in gathering the harvest).

The important truth to understand is that there is a passing of time before the seed can produce. These seeds of God’s Word being sown (and are being sown) in our hearts may not bring a bumper harvest overnight. Typically, there will be the passing of time and then we will see the effect and the results of the seeds that we have been sowing in our hearts.

Initially we may only experience a thirtyfold harvest. But we know that there is a passage of time that is necessary for the seed to germinate and grow up. We continue to sow the Word into our hearts knowing that harvest time will soon come. And then, as we keep sowing the seed of the Word, we will enjoy many more rich and bountiful harvests of what the Word produces.

We may not be able to fully explain how sowing the seed of God’s Word into our hearts is going to cause that Word to produce in our lives. For instance, we cannot fully explain how, if a person sows the seed of the Word concerning success and prosperity, this Word will cause them to experience success and prosperity in all they do. Likewise, we cannot fully explain how, when someone sows the seed of God’s Word for healing and health, they can experience God’s power that would heal them of sickness and disease and keep them in good health. We can only say that the Word is like a seed, and the seed will produce, even when we do not know how. When the Word is sown on good ground and nurtured, it will produce that which it has been designed to produce.

8. Revelation: Receiving Spiritual Understanding

When We Do Not Understand The Word

Matthew 13:19
When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

The Lord Jesus stated that when we do not understand the Word, satan then snatches away the seed, thus preventing it from taking root and producing in our lives. We must understand the Word (get an understanding of spiritual truth) to keep satan from stealing the Word. Satan will make his best efforts to prevent us from understanding the Word through arguments, confusions, lies, deceptions, and so on.

The Greek word used for the word "understand" simply means "to put together, grasp, and comprehend." While we must intelligently and intellectually understand the Word, there is also the aspect of receiving understanding of spiritual truth, which we call as revelation.

Luke 8:12
Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Satan does not want us to come to the place where we believe the Word. So, he attempts to get the Word away from us before we can get a revelation of it and believe it. However, once we understand or receive a revelation of the Word, we can then believe the Word and experience the power of the Word at work in our lives.

The Scriptures And Human Intellect

1 Corinthians 2:14
But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

It is by the ability of our intellect that we read and understand the meaning of the Words of Scripture. We use our intellect to study the Hebrew and Greek, the historical background and context in which the Scriptures were written. God has given us our intellect and we must make good use of it.

However, the natural man with his natural mind is unable to recognize divine truths that the Spirit of God is conveying through the Word. It takes spiritual discernment (or spiritual insight) to receive the things of the Spirit. This is where the ability of the human intellect ends and dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit begins.

1 Corinthians 2:9-12
9 But as it is written: "eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."
10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.
11 For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.
12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

God reveals (unveils, takes the cover off) spiritual truth and realities to us by His Holy Spirit. This enables us to know (to understand, be sure of, see, perceive) the things God has freely given to us.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of revelation. He enables us to see the divine truths contained in Scripture. He takes us beyond the meaning of the words that were penned by the men of old, and into the original thoughts expressed by God. There is a vast difference between the thoughts of man and the thoughts of God. The Lord God said: *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:9).

Revelation is moving from intellectual understanding to spiritual understanding. It is through revelation that we understand spiritual truth. When a person does not receive a revelation of spiritual truth (that is, does not get a spiritual understanding of the Word), Jesus said, *"then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart…"* (Matthew 13:19).

Praying For Revelation

Ephesians 1:17-19
17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,
18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power

In Paul's prayer for the believers at Ephesus, he asks specifically for the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, and the enlightening (illumination) of their understanding so that they

would know God, know the purpose of God's calling, know the glorious inheritance God has for His people, and know the greatness of the power which God has made available to His people. So, knowledge and understanding of such spiritual truth comes through revelation and illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enlightens or illuminates the eyes of our understanding so that we can know spiritual truth.

When, through the process of revelation we receive spiritual understanding, we have gone from natural head knowledge to knowing in our spirits. This is the difference between natural knowledge and spiritual knowledge, or head knowledge and heart knowledge. When we know something in our hearts (spirits), it means that the eyes of our hearts have been illuminated to understand. Hence, we know and believe it from deep within. We embrace spiritual truth, believe it, walk in it, and experience it.

So, when we hear the Word or read the Word, we must pray for revelation and understanding of spiritual truth. When we receive a revelation of the Word and believe it, satan is unable to steal or snatch that Word away from us. We see it. We believe it. It is now ours!

9. Harvest Blockers: Opposition To The Word

Matthew 13:20-21
20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;
21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.

Mark 4:16-17
16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness;
17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble.

Luke 8:13
But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away.

We now examine what Jesus pointed to as factors that keep the seed from producing fruit. There is nothing wrong with the seed. The seed is the Word of God and therefore is perfect. But there are external factors that keep the seed of the Word from bearing fruit.

One set of external factors that could block the harvest, Jesus said was tribulation or persecution because of the Word, and a time of temptation.

Stand Through Opposition To The Word

As we hear and receive the Word of God, there will be tribulation (hardship, pressure), persecution (human opposition), and temptation (difficulties, inducements to sin) that come because of the Word. These oppositions are often in the very areas where we are hearing and receiving the Word. Sometimes satan's temptations are inducements to doubt, question, and rationalize away the truth of the Word and get into a place of fear or unbelief. Regardless of what the nature and source of opposition, whether tribulation, persecution, or temptation, we must stand firm believing the Word we have received. We must hold fast to the Word and allow it to take root in our hearts, so that it can produce in our lives.

For instance, let us say that we hear the Word on divine healing. The revelation of divine healing fills us with joy and great excitement. Shortly thereafter we face some sort of

illness. What would we do? Would we discard the Word on divine healing saying, "well, it is not for everybody", or "maybe divine healing was only for the Early Church and is not for us today", or some other similar argument? Or do we intentionally go back to the Word, read it again, hear it again, meditate, and feed our spirits even more with the Word on divine healing? It is important to do the latter, so that the Word we have heard on divine healing can get deeper in us.

Let The Word Take Deep Root In You

We may receive the Word with great enthusiasm, joy, and excitement. However, the real test is if we will stay with the Word over time so that the Word can actually *"take root,"* that is get deep into our hearts and have a firm hold inside us. If the Word does not have deep root in us, then we could stumble (get offended, trip up) and fall away (withdraw, depart) from the Word.

For the Word to take deep root in us, we must continue to feed on the Word and strengthen our revelation of the Word. We must do this when times are good, and there is no real opposition to the Word. In general, we have the tendency to tune off when we hear a repeat of the same message—the same Word being brought to us. But we need to hear and keep hearing the Word, so that it can take deep root within us and we are able to stand when we face opposition to the Word. As Hebrews 2:1 states: *"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."*

Continually feed your spirit with truth and revelation you have received so that it is deeply rooted in you. This will ensure you do not quit in times of difficulty.

10. Harvest Blockers: Thorns That Choke The Word

Matthew 13:22
Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

Mark 4:18-19
18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word,
19 and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

Luke 8:14
Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

The next set of harvest blockers Jesus pointed to are thorns that choke the Word. Thorns represent cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, desire for other things, and the pleasures of life. The one common effect all these have is distraction. They move our focus and attention away from Word onto other things. So, these act like thorns that prevent sufficient light, water, and nutrients from reaching the young plant and thus eventually destroying it. This is what happens to us. We get distracted and preoccupied with other things and we neglect protecting and nurturing the Word in our hearts. Eventually the Word is made unproductive in our lives.

Guard Against Thorns That Choke The Word

We must guard our hearts from the cares of this world, deceitfulness of riches, desire for other things and the pleasures of life. While all of us have cares (responsibilities that we have to fulfill), we handle riches (money, finances, wealth), have other interests, and enjoy legitimate pleasures (good things), we must ensure that our hearts are not drawn away from God and His Word, by these things.

Here are some practical ways to guard against thorns:
1) Affirm your love for God and His Word
2) Guard your own heart

Affirm Your Love for God and His Word

It is indeed wonderful to affirm our love and passion for God and His Word often as the Psalmist did in Psalm 119. Here are selected verses from that Psalm that teach us how to affirm our love for God's Word.

Psalm 119
16 I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word.
36 Incline my heart to Your testimonies, And not to covetousness.
37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.
47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love.
72 The law of Your mouth is better to me Than thousands of coins of gold and silver.
97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.
127 Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!
162 I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure.

Guard Your Own Heart

We must constantly keep a watch over the affections and passions of our hearts. We keep a check on where our interests are, what they are on. When we feel we are distracted or drifting away from our first love, we confess it and ask the Lord to redirect our hearts and draw us back to Himself. Ensure we intentionally and practically put God first in our lives by seeking Him (Matthew 6:33). Make time and space to be with God in His presence in worship, prayer and in His Word. *"..If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them"* (Psalm 62:10a).

11. Three Keys: Understand, Receive, Retain

The Lord Jesus revealed to us what causes the seed of the Word to eventually produce in our lives. Looking at the how the three Gospels record these, we learn that when we understand (Matthew 13:23), receive (Mark 4:20) and retain (Luke 8:15) the Word in our hearts, we will bring forth fruit in our lives.

Understand

Matthew 13:23
But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

We have examined in an earlier chapter the importance of understanding spiritual truth and receiving revelation. The unveiling of spiritual truth to our hearts is progressive. We progressively see spiritual truth clearly as more and more light is shed into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. We must continue to receive revelation on various areas of truth as given to us in His Word. We must be constantly increasing in our knowledge of our Lord (Colossians 1:10), continue to grow in grace and in knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), be renewed in our knowledge (Colossians 3:10), comprehend and know the love of Christ (Ephesians 3:18-19) and come to the knowledge of the Son of God (Ephesians 4:13). Our spiritual journey is a continued growth in revelation of our God, His purposes, the inheritance He has for us and of the power He has made available for us.

So, keep hearing the Word. Keep meditating in the Word. Keep studying the Scriptures. Continue receiving revelation and fresh insight into all areas of the Christian faith and journey. Like the Psalmist we pray continually *"Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law"* (Psalm 119:18).

Receive

Mark 4:20
But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

We must receive, accept, and embrace, that is believe the Word with our hearts. We must believe the Word wholeheartedly for it to do its work in our hearts and lives. It is interesting to note what Hebrews 4:2 tells us: *"For indeed the gospel was preached to us*

as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it." When we fail to mix faith with the Word (believe the Word) then the Word will not profit or benefit us. On the other hand, when we believe the Word, we will see it bearing fruit and being fulfilled in our lives. *"Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord"* (Luke 1:45).

As we have mentioned earlier, satan and his demons will make every effort to prevent us from believing the Word through doubts, unbelief, fear, etc. But we must remain strong in faith. Keep believing the Word. His Word is truth (John 17:17).

Retain

Luke 8:15
But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

The word "keep" in the verse above, from the Greek, has the idea of holding fast, retaining, staying on, sticking with, and clinging on. So, we must hold on to the Word with endurance through all that comes our way and through time. This is the Word that will produce in our lives.

These three keys: understand the Word, receive the Word, and retain the Word are so important if the Word is to bear fruit in our lives. Initially, as we meditate and receive the Word, we may see it bear a small measure of fruit (thirtyfold). We must continue in this and stay with the Word. Continue receiving revelation, believing the Word, and keeping the Word in our lives. Soon we will see an increased measure of fruit being borne, sixtyfold and hundredfold fruit.

Keep Living By The Word

James 1:22,25
22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.
25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

Ultimately, the purpose of receiving revelation of the Word is so that our minds can be renewed, and our way of life transformed (Romans 12:2). The spiritual truths that are revealed to us must affect our thinking. Our thought patterns, our reasoning and our persuasions must be influenced and ordered by the spiritual understanding we have received. This process is called renewing of the mind. When this happens, we can

consistently live in accordance with the revelation we have received, from God's Word. We must become doers of the Word and live by the truth we have received. When we live by the Word, we will walk in the blessings promised in the Word.

God's intent in giving us the Scriptures is that we may live continually by them. He has made His Spirit available to us to help us understand His Word. However, receiving a revelation of the Word, by itself, is insufficient to experience the full blessings of His promises. It is the person who translates revelation into consistent action, who walks in the riches of what God has promised. Our challenge to you is that you will depend on the Holy Spirit to receive insight into the Scriptures. Then, allow your mind to be renewed by the revelation you receive. And then translate the revelation to disciplined action in your everyday living. You will then be a person who, as the Scripture says, is blessed in whatever you do.

The Abiding Word

The apostle John records for us the importance of having the Word abide in us and we abiding in His Word. Abide, simply means to remain, to dwell, to keep, to continue in. It has to do with holding on to His Word and consistently living by that Word through time. Jesus taught us that when we continue in His Word that is an expression of us being His disciples. Doing so will lead us into the truth that will liberate us and transform us (John 8:31-32). Abiding in His Word is an expression of our love for Him. He will reveal more of Himself to the person who keeps His Word. When we continue in His Word, we will experience His presence (John 14:21,23). Abiding in Him and His Word abiding in us is key to answered prayer. Jesus said: *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you"* (John 15:7). Also, as we have mentioned earlier, it is through His abiding Word that we live victoriously over the devil. *"I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one"* (1 John 2:14).

You Are God's Garden

In closing, we can picture ourselves, each one of us, as God's garden. God has given us His Word—miracle seeds—that He desires for us to sow in our own hearts and lives. There are seeds of blessing, victory, healing, prosperity, peace, love, holiness, purity, power and much more, that can produce these very things in our lives. May we develop the discipline of sowing the seed of the Word into our hearts and lives! May we allow God to fulfil His purpose and pleasure in our lives through the power of His Word!

12. Word Seeds

This is a collection of Scriptures on the same topic/theme. You can add to these and assemble Scriptures on topics/themes that are important to you. Use them as a quick reference when needed. Meditate in God's Word often.

Angelic Protection

Psalm 34:7; Psalm 91:11-12; Psalm 103:20; Daniel 6:22; Matthew 18:10; Luke 22:41-43; Acts 5:19-20; Acts 8:26; Acts 12:7-11; Acts 27:23-24; Hebrews 1:14

Anointing

Exodus 30:25-33; 1 Samuel 24:6; 1 Chronicles 16:21-22; Psalm 28:8; Psalm 45:7; Psalm 92:10; Isaiah 10:27; Isaiah 61:1-3; Micah 3:8; Zechariah 4:6-7; Matthew 12:28; Luke 1:35; Luke 4:18-19; Luke 4:14; Luke 5:17; Luke 6:19; Luke 8:43-48; Luke 24:49; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; Acts 4:33; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 6:8; Acts 10:38; Romans 1:3-4; Romans 15:13; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:19-20; Ephesians 3:16; Ephesians 3:20-21; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 2:3-4; 1 John 2:20; 1 John 2:27

Answer to Prayer

Psalm 37:4; Psalm 65:2; Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 10:24; Proverbs 15:29b; Matthew 7:7-11; Matthew 18:18-20; Matthew 21:22; Mark 11:22-24; Luke 18:1; John 14:13-14; John 15:7; John 16:23-24; Philippians 4:6-7; James 1:5-7; James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 3:21-22; 1 John 5:14-15

Armor of God

Romans 13:12-14; 2 Corinthians 6:3-7; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 1:18

Baby in the Womb

Genesis 20:17-18; Exodus 23:25-26; Deuteronomy 7:12-15; Deuteronomy 28:4; Job 31:15; Psalm 8:2; Psalm 71:5-7; Psalm 113:9; Psalm 119:73; Psalm 138:8; Psalm 139:13-17; Isaiah 66:9; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15-16

Believer's Authority

Matthew 10:1,7-8; Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 3:14-15; Mark 9:38-40; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 10:17-20; Acts 3:6-9,16; Acts 4:9-10; Acts 16:16-18; Ephesians 2:4-6; Philippians 2:9-11

Blessing and Being Blessed

Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:7; Genesis 22:17-18; Genesis 24:1,35; Genesis 26:12-14; Numbers 6:23-27; Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Psalm 103:1-6; Psalm 112:1-10; Psalm 128:1-6; Proverbs 10:22; Galatians 3:9,13-14,29; Ephesians 1:3; Hebrews 8:6

Blood of Jesus

Exodus 12:13,23; Exodus 24:8; Leviticus 17:11; Zechariah 9:11; Matthew 26:28; Acts 20:28; Romans 3:24-26; Romans 5:9; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 1 Corinthians 10:16; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:13; Colossians 1:14,20-22; Colossians 2:14-15; Hebrews 2:14-15; Hebrews 9:12-14; Hebrews 10:19-22; Hebrews 10:28-29; Hebrews 12:22-24; Hebrews 13:12; Hebrews 13:20-21; 1 Peter 1:1-2; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:5-6; Revelation 5:9-10; Revelation 7:14-15; Revelation 12:10-11

Boldness

Psalm 138:3; Proverbs 28:1; Acts 4:13; Acts 4:29-31; Acts 14:3; 2 Corinthians 3:11-12; Philippians 1:20; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 John 4:17-18 (See also Courage, Confidence)

Bones

Psalm 34:20; Proverbs 3:5-8; Proverbs 14:30; Proverbs 17:22; Isaiah 58:11

Casting Out Demons

Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 8:16-17; Matthew 9:32-33; Matthew 10:1,7-8; Matthew 12:28-29; Matthew 17:18-21; Mark 3:14-15; Mark 6:7,12-13; Mark 9:38-40; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 9:1-2; Luke 10:17-20; Luke 13:10-13; John 14:12; Acts 16:16-18; Acts 19:11-12

Children

Deuteronomy 4:9; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Deuteronomy 28:4; Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 25:12-13; Psalm 37:25-26; Psalm 78:4-6; Psalm 90:16; Psalm 103:17; Psalm 112:1-2;

Psalm 113:9; Psalm 127:1-5; Proverbs 13:22; Proverbs 14:26; Proverbs 20:7; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 31:28; Isaiah 8:18; Isaiah 44:3-4; Isaiah 49:25; Isaiah 54:13; Isaiah 59:21; Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:17; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Timothy 3:12; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15; 3 John 1:4

Confidence

Psalm 65:5; Psalm 118:8; Psalm 118:9; Proverbs 3:26; Proverbs 14:26 (See also: Boldness, Courage)

Courage

Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:7,9; 2 Chronicles 32:7; Psalm 27:14 (see also: Boldness, Confidence)

Debt Cancellation

Deuteronomy 15:6; Deuteronomy 28:8,11-12; 2 Kings 4:1-7; Psalm 128:1-2; Proverbs 3:9-10; Proverbs 22:7; Isaiah 65:22; Malachi 3:10-11; Matthew 17:24-27; Mark 11:22-23; Luke 5:4-7; Romans 2:11; Romans 13:8

Deliverance

Psalm 18:1-2,17,19,43,48,50; Psalm 32:7; Psalm 34:4,7,17,19; Psalm 91:3,14,15; Psalm 107:20; Psalm 116:8; Matthew 6:13; Colossians 1:12-13; Galatians 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 2:9

Exploits

Joshua 1:5; Psalm 60:12; Isaiah 45:1-3; Daniel 11:32b; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 3:20-21; Philippians 1:6; Philippians 2:13; Hebrews 11:33-34

Faith

Matthew 9:28-29; Matthew 17:20; Matthew 21:21; Mark 9:23; Mark 11:22-23; Luke 1:45; Luke 17:5-6; John 11:40; Acts 3:16; Acts 6:8; Acts 27:25; Romans 4:12,17-21; Romans 10:8-10; Romans 12:3; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:6; Ephesians 6:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Timothy 6:12; Philemon 1:6; Hebrews 3:1; Hebrews 4:2; Hebrews 4:14; Hebrews 6:12; Hebrews 10:22-23; Hebrews 10:35-36; James 1:5-7; James 2:17-18,21-22,26

Favor and Good Relationships

Genesis 39:2-4,21; Exodus 12:36; 1 Chronicles 29:12; Psalm 5:12; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 119:74; Proverbs 3:3-4; Proverbs 4:7-8; Proverbs 12:2; Proverbs 16:7; Proverbs 22:4; Proverbs 29:23; Isaiah 61:7; 1 Timothy 4:1

Future

Psalm 31:15; Psalm 71:6-7; Psalm 71:17-18; Psalm 138:8; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 4:18; Isaiah 46:3-4; Isaiah 64:8; Jeremiah 29:11; Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 8:28; 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; Ephesians 2:10; Philippians 3:12-14; Philippians 4:6-7

Gifts of the Spirit

Acts 2:22; Acts 2:43; Acts 4:29-30; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 6:8; Acts 7:36; Acts 14:3; Romans 12:6; Romans 15:18-19; 1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 1 Corinthians 4:20; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; 1 Corinthians 12:31; 1 Corinthians 14:1,3,12,26,31,39; 1 Corinthians 14:39; 2 Corinthians 12:12; 1 Thessalonians 1:5; Hebrews 2:3-4

Glory of God

Exodus 24:16-17; Exodus 29:43; Exodus 33:18-19; Exodus 40:33-35; Numbers 9:15-23; Numbers 14:21; Deuteronomy 5:24; 1 Samuel 4:21-22; 1 Kings 8:10-11; 2 Chronicles 5:13-14; Psalm 24:7-10; Psalm 26:8; Psalm 63:1-2; Psalm 85:9; Psalm 90:16-17; Isaiah 4:5-6; Isaiah 11:10; Isaiah 35:1-2; Isaiah 40:5; Isaiah 42:8; Isaiah 48:11; Isaiah 58:8; Isaiah 60:1-7; Ezekiel 1:28; Ezekiel 3:12; Ezekiel 10:4,18; Habakkuk 2:14; Habakkuk 3:3-4; Haggai 2:7-9; John 1:14; John 2:11; John 11:4,40; John 14:21-23; John 17:5,22,24; Acts 7:55; Romans 8:15-25; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 3:7-18; 2 Corinthians 4:6-7; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; Ephesians 2:21-22; Colossians 1:26-27; Hebrews 1:3; 1 Peter 4:14; 2 Peter 1:16-18

Godly Desires

Psalm 27:4; Psalm 37:4; Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 84:1-3,10; Psalm 63:1-8; Psalm 145:19; Proverbs 10:24; Isaiah 26:9; Matthew 6:33; Mark 12:29-31; Romans 8:13; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24; Galatians 6:7-8; Galatians 6:14; Philippians 3:7-11; Philippians 4:8; Colossian 3:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:19-21; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17

Greatness of Our God

Psalm 86:8-12; Psalm 121:2; Psalm 145:1-21; Psalm 147:4-5; Isaiah 37:16; Isaiah 40:21-31; Isaiah 45:12,18; Jeremiah 32:17,27; Jeremiah 51:15; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Timothy 6:14-16; Revelation 5:11-14; Revelation 7:9-12; Revelation 19:4-6

Guidance

Psalm 25:12; Psalm 32:8-9; Psalm 37:23-24; Psalm 119:103-105; Psalm 119:130; Psalm 119:133; Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 4:18; Proverbs 4:26; Isaiah 58:11; Romans 8:14; Colossians 3:15

Healing and Health

Genesis 20:17; Exodus 15:26; Exodus 23:25-26; Deuteronomy 7:15; Job 33:19-28; Psalm 30:2; Psalm 41:1-3; Psalm 91:5-10; Psalm 103:1-5; Psalm 107:20; Proverbs 3:7-8; Proverbs 4:20-22; Proverbs 12:18; Proverbs 18:21-22; Isaiah 6:10; Isaiah 53:4-5; Isaiah 58:8; Jeremiah 17:14; Ezekiel 34:4; Ezekiel 47:8-9; Matthew 4:24; Matthew 8:16-17; Matthew 12:15; Matthew 15:25-28; Mark 5:34; Luke 4:40; Luke 13:11-13,16; Acts 10:38; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Hebrews 11:11; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 22:1-2

Healing the Sick

Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 10:1,7-8; Matthew 15:29-31; Mark 6:7,12-13; Mark 16:17-18; Luke 5:17; Luke 6:17-19; Luke 9:1-2; Luke 9:11; Luke 10:1,9; John 14:12; Acts 10:38; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11; James 5:14-16; 1 John 3:8

Holiness (Overcoming Sin, Purity)

Exodus 15:11; Exodus 19:6; Deuteronomy 7:6; Deuteronomy 23:14; Job 31:1; Psalm 29:2; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 4:3; Psalm 15:1-5; Psalm 19:12-14; Psalm 24:3-5; Psalm 29:2; Psalm 96:9; Psalm 119:9-11; Proverbs 5:15-23; Proverbs 6:23-25; Ecclesiastes 7:26; Isaiah 52:11; Obadiah 1:17; Malachi 3:1-3; Matthew 5:29-30; Romans 1:4; Romans 6:6-7,12-14; Romans 8:5-8,12-13; Romans 12:1-2; Romans 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:12-13,17-20; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 4:20-32; Ephesians 5:1-5; Philippians 2:14-15; Philippians 4:4-8; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:19-22; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 10:26-27; Hebrews 12:1-4; Hebrews 12:14-16; James 3:8-10; James 4:4-8; 1 Peter 1:13-17; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 Peter 4:1-2; 2 Peter 3:14,17-18; 1 John 2:15-17; Jude 1:17-25

Home and Family

Genesis 18:19; Genesis 22:16-18; Genesis 39:2-5; Deuteronomy 28:1-12; Joshua 24:14-15; 2 Samuel 6:12; Job 5:24; Psalm 68:5; Psalm 91:10; Psalm 101:1-2,7; Psalm 112:1-3; Psalm 118:15; Psalm 127:1-5; Psalm 128:1-4; Psalm 144:12-15; Proverbs 3:33; Proverbs 12:7; Proverbs 14:11; Proverbs 15:6; Isaiah 32:17-19; Isaiah 65:21-23; John 14:23

Husband

Genesis 2:22-24; Psalm 128:1-4; Proverbs 19:14; Proverbs 31:10-11,23,28; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 7:3-5,10-11; 1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23-33; Colossians 3:19; 1 Timothy 5:4; 1 Peter 3:7

Joy (Overcoming Grief, Sadness)

Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 5:11; Psalm 16:11; Psalm 30:5; Psalm 32:11; Psalm 33:1,3,21; Psalm 35:9; Psalm 43:4; Psalm 126:5-6; Isaiah 12:3; Isaiah 29:19; Isaiah 51:11; Isaiah 61:3,7; Habakkuk 3:17-18; Matthew 5:12; John 16:22-24; John 17:13; Acts 13:52; Romans 14:17; Romans 15:13; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:4; Colossians 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; Hebrews 1:9; James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 1:8-9; 1 Peter 4:12-14; 1 John 1:4

Land and Property Matters

Deuteronomy 28:8,11-12; Psalm 16:5; Psalm 37:29; Psalm 125:3; Mark 10:29-30

Legal Challenges

Deuteronomy 10:18; Deuteronomy 28:7; Psalm 3; Psalm 12:5; Psalm 37:6,28; Psalm 72:14; Psalm 89:14 Psalm 103:6; Psalm 119:121; Psalm 140:12; Psalm 146:7; Isaiah 28:5-6; Isaiah 54:14,17

Longevity

Genesis 6:3; Exodus 23:25-26; Deuteronomy 34:7; Job 5:26; Psalm 34:12-14; Psalm 71:5-9,17-18; Psalm 90:10-12; Psalm 91:14-16; Psalm 92:12-15; Psalm 103:15-17; Psalm 128:1,6; Proverbs 3:1-2; Proverbs 17:6; Isaiah 46:4; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 2 Corinthians 5:1-9; Philippians 1:21; 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Love

Mark 12:29-31; John 13:34-35; Romans 5:5; Romans 12:9-21; Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Galatians 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:31-32; Ephesians 5:1-2; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:5; Hebrews 6:10; 1 John 2:9-11; 1 John 3:14-18; 1 John 4:7-12; 1 John 4:16-21; Jude 1:20-21

Mind

1 Chronicles 28:9; Job 38:36; Psalm 26:2; Psalm 19:7,14; Psalm 23:3; Psalm 35:9; Psalm 42:5,6,11; Psalm 62:1,5; Psalm 94:19; Psalm 103:1,2; Psalm 131:2; Psalm 138:3; Psalm 139:2; Isaiah 26:3,9; Isaiah 55:7-9; Lamentations 3:21-23; Matthew 5:28; Matthew 15:18-19; Mark 12:30; Romans 8:5-8; Romans 12:1-2,16; Romans 14:5; 1 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 4:23-24; Philippians 2:3,5-8,15; Philippians 3:12-15; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Timothy 1:7; Hebrews 4:12; Hebrews 8:10; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 Peter 4:1; James 1:21; 3 John 2

Peace (Overcoming Fear, Anxiety, Worry)

Judges 6:23-24; Psalm 4:8; Psalm 37:11,37; Psalm 119:165; Isaiah 9:6-7; Isaiah 26:3,12; Isaiah 32:17-18; Isaiah 48:17-18; Isaiah 53:5; Isaiah 54:10,13; Isaiah 55:12; Matthew 5:9; John 14:27; John 16:33; Romans 5:1; Romans 8:6; Romans 12:18; Romans 14:17-19; Romans 15:13,33; Romans 16:20; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Corinthians 14:33; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:22-23; Philippians 4:6-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:16; Hebrews 12:14

Promotion

Deuteronomy 28:13; Job 8:6-7; Psalm 37:4-5; Psalm 75:6-7; Proverbs 16:3; Proverbs 22:4; Proverbs 22:29; Isaiah 1:19; Isaiah 48:17; Isaiah 54:1-3; Isaiah 60:22; John 15:5; 1 Timothy 6:17

Prosperity and Success

Genesis 26:12; Genesis 39:2-3,23; Deuteronomy 29:9; Deuteronomy 30:5; Joshua 1:7-8; 1 Kings 2:3; 2 Chronicles 20:20; 2 Chronicles 26:5; 2 Chronicles 31:21; Nehemiah 2:20; Job 8:6-7; Job 36:10-11; Psalm 1:1-3; Psalm 25:12-13; Psalm 35:27; Psalm 118:25; Proverbs 28:25; Zechariah 8:12; 3 John 1:2; (See also: Blessing and Being Blessed)

Protection

Psalm 3:3-6; Psalm 27:1-5; Psalm 32:7; Psalm 34:4,7,17,19; Psalm 50:15; Psalm 91:10-12; Psalm 121:1-8; Proverbs 19:23; Proverbs 21:31; Isaiah 54:14-15,17; Isaiah 59:19

Provision

Genesis 22:13-14; Psalm 23:1-6; Psalm 34:9-10; Psalm 37:25; Psalm 84:11; Matthew 6:31-33; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Philippians 4:19.

Quietness

Psalm 131:2; Isaiah 30:15; Isaiah 32:17-18; Lamentations 3:26; Zephaniah 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-12; 1 Peter 3:3-4

Raising the dead

1 Kings 17:17-24; 2 Kings 4:32-37; 2 Kings 13:20-21; Matthew 10:7-8; Matthew 11:4-5; Mark 5:35-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:38-45; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 14:19-20; Acts 20:9-10; Acts 26:8; Romans 4:17; Hebrews 11:35

Sleep

Psalm 4:8; Psalm 16:7; Psalm 127:2; Proverbs 3:24; Proverbs 6:22-23

Spirit filled and Spirit led

Matthew 4:1; John 16:13-15; Acts 5:32; Acts 8:29; Acts 10:19-20; Acts 13:2-3; Acts 15:28-29; Acts 16:6-10; Acts 18:5; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:22-23; Acts 21:4; Acts 21:10-11; Romans 8:1-2,13-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 4:30; Ephesians 5:17-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:19

Strength

Exodus 15:2; Deuteronomy 33:25; 1 Samuel 30:6; 2 Samuel 22:33; Psalm 27:1,14; Psalm 31:24; Psalm 46:1-3; Psalm 73:26; Isaiah 11:2; Isaiah 28:5-6; Isaiah 40:28-31; Isaiah 41:10; 2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 3:16; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11

Wife

Proverbs 12:4; Proverbs 14:1; Proverbs 31:10-31; 1 Corinthians 7:2-4,10-11; Ephesians 5:22-24,33; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:1-5; 1 Peter 3:1-6

Wisdom and Understanding

Genesis 41:38-39; Exodus 31:1-5; Exodus 35:30-35; Exodus 36:1; 1 Chronicles 28:11-12,19; 1 Kings 4:29; Job 12:13; Job 28:20,28; Job 32:8; Psalm 18:28; Psalm 25:14; Psalm 51:6; Psalm 111:10; Psalm 112:5; Psalm 119:97-99,130; Proverbs 2:6; Proverbs 3:32; Proverbs 4:5-9; Proverbs 8:11-21; Proverbs 20:27; Isaiah 11:1-2; Isaiah 28:23-29; Isaiah 29:24; Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 51:15; Daniel 1:17; Daniel 2:20-22,28; Daniel 5:12-14; Luke 24:45; 1 Corinthians 2:9-12; James 1:5

Partner with All Peoples Church

All Peoples Church ministers beyond its own borders as a local church by reaching out all across India, especially North India, with a special focus on (A) Strengthening Leaders, (B) Equipping young people for ministry and (C) Building up the Body of Christ. Several training seminars for young people, and Christian Leaders conferences are held throughout the year. In addition, several thousands of copies of publications are distributed free of cost in English and other Indian languages with the purpose of equipping believers in the Word and in the Spirit.

We invite you to partner with us financially by sending either a one-time gift or a monthly financial gift. Any amount that you can send to help us in this work across our nation will be greatly appreciated.

You can send your gift by cheque / bank draft payable to "All Peoples Church" to our office address. Else you can remit your contribution directly by bank transfer using our bank account details.

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Also, please remember to pray for us and our ministry whenever you can.
Thank You and God Bless!

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Also visit our church website for free audio and video sermons, sermon notes (**apcwo.org/sermons**), and many other resources you can use.

ATTEND A WEEKEND SCHOOL

Weekend Schools, held in Bangalore, are geared to train and equip believers in specific areas of life and ministry. These are conveniently held on a Saturday 9am-6pm. Weekend schools are open to all believers from all churches and across denominations, who are interested in being trained and equipped. Below is a list of weekend schools that are currently being hosted.

Weekend School of Prophetic Ministry
Weekend School of Healing and Deliverance
Weekend School on Gifts of the Spirit
Weekend School of Prayer and Intercession
Weekend School on Inner Wholeness
Weekend School on Lifestyle Evangelism
Weekend School on God@Work
Weekend School of Urban Missions and Church Planting
Weekend School on Christian Apologetics

Please visit: **apcwo.org/weekendschool** for current schedule and to register online

HOST A CHRISTIAN LEADERS CONFERENCE

All Peoples Church provides Spirit anointed equipping and impartation for pastors, local church leadership, leaders of Christian organizations and others engaging in Christian ministry. In addition to anointed teaching, Spirit-led ministry and impartation, our teams engage in personal interaction and discussions with participants. Each Christian Leaders Conference runs typically for 2 to 3 days focused on a specific theme. Participants will leave renewed, empowered, and equipped for greater impact and effectiveness in their ministry. Christian Leaders Conferences are typically hosted by a local church, a Christian ministry, a missions organization or denominational head-office for churches and pastors in its area or within its network or denomination. The hosting organization will cover the expenses of the conference as well as inviting participants. All Peoples Church will send its ministry team to serve the participants at the Christian Leaders Conference.

Some of the themes that our teams commonly minister on:

- **Revivals, Visitations and Moves of God**
- **Presence and Glory**
- **Kingdom Builders** (The Kingdom of God and Kingdom Building)
- **Level Ground**
- **The House of God**
- **Apostolic and Prophetic Ministry**
- **Ministering Healing and Deliverance**
- **Gifts of the Spirit**
- **Marriage and Family**
- **Equipping the Saints and Marketplace Transformation**

For additional details and a current listing of themes for Christian Leaders Conference, please visit: **apcwo.org/CLC**

To schedule and plan a Christian Leaders Conference please email us at: contact@apcwo.org

About All Peoples Church

At All Peoples Church (APC), our vision is to be salt and light in the city of Bangalore and a voice to the nation of India and to the nations of the world.

At APC, we are committed to presenting the complete, un-compromised Word of God in the anointing and demonstration of His Holy Spirit. We believe that good music, creative presentations, brilliant apologetics, contemporary ministry techniques, latest technology and so on, can never substitute the God-ordained approach of proclaiming the Word in the power of the Holy Spirit with signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:4,5; Hebrews 2:3,4). Our theme is Jesus, our content is the Word, our method is Holy Spirit power, our passion is people, and our goal is Christ-like maturity.

With our main base in Bangalore, All Peoples Church has several other church locations in India. To get a current listing and contact information of All Peoples Church locations, please visit our website at **www.apcwo.org/locations** or send an email to **contact@apcwo.org**.

DO YOU KNOW THE GOD WHO LOVES YOU?

About 2000 years ago, God came into this world as a man. His name is Jesus. He lived a perfectly sinless life. Since Jesus was God in flesh, everything He said and did revealed God to us. The words He spoke were the very words of God. The things He did were the actions of God. Jesus did many miracles on the Earth. He healed the sick and suffering. He opened blind eyes, unstopped deaf ears, made the lame to walk and healed every kind of sickness and disease. He fed the hungry by miraculously multiplying a few loaves of bread, calmed the storm and did many other wonderful things.

All of these actions reveal to us that God is a good God who wants people to be well, whole, healthy and happy. God wants to meet the needs of people.

So why then would God decide to become a man and step into our world? Why did Jesus come?

All of us have sinned and done things that are unacceptable before the God who created us. Sin has its consequences. Sin is like a great unsurpassable wall between God and us. Sin separates us from God. It prevents us from knowing and having a meaningful relationship with the One who created us. Therefore, many of us try to fill this void with other things.

Another consequence of our sins is eternal separation from God. In God's court, the penalty for sin is death. Death is eternal separation from God in hell.

But the good news is that we can be free from sin and be restored to God. The Bible says, **"For the wages [payment] of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23).** Jesus paid for the sins of the whole world when He died on the cross. Then, three days later He rose again, showed Himself alive to many and then went back into heaven."

God is a God of love and mercy. He does not wish that any person be lost in hell. And so, He came, to provide a way for the entire human race to be free from sin and its lasting consequences. He came to save sinners—to rescue people like you and me from sin and eternal death.

To receive this free forgiveness of sins, the Bible tells us that we have to do just one thing—accept what the Lord Jesus Christ did on the cross and to believe in Him whole-heartedly.

"… through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43).

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9).

You too can receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins if you will believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The following is a simple prayer to help you make a decision to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you on the cross. This prayer will help you express your acceptance of what Jesus has done for you and receive forgiveness and cleansing for your sins. This prayer is only a guideline. You can also pray in your own words.

Dear Lord Jesus, today, I have understood what You did for me on the cross. You died for me, you shed Your precious blood and paid the penalty for my sins, so that I could be forgiven. The Bible tells me that whoever believes in You will receive forgiveness for their sins.

Today, I make a decision to believe in You and to accept what You did for me, by dying for me on the cross and rising again from the dead. I know I cannot save myself by my own good works, neither can any other human save me. I cannot earn forgiveness for my sins.

Today, I believe in my heart and say with my mouth that You died for me, You paid the penalty for my sins, You rose again from the dead, and by faith in You, I receive forgiveness and cleansing for my sins..

Thank You Jesus. Help me to love You, to know You more and to be faithful to You. Amen.

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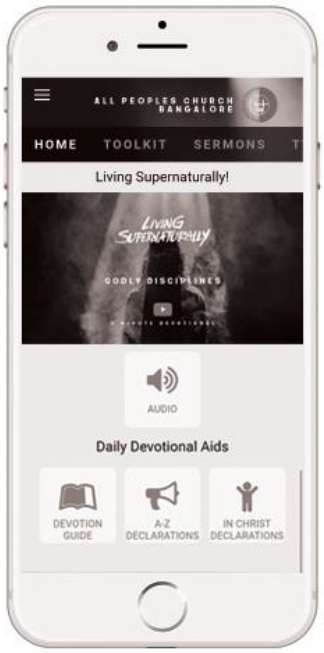

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IF YOU LOVE IT, TELL OTHERS ABOUT IT!

All Peoples Church Bible College
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All Peoples Church Bible College (APC-BC), in Bangalore, India, provides Spirit-filled, anointed, hands-on training and equipping for ministering in the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit along with doctrinally sound and intellectually stimulating study of God's Word. We believe in developing the whole person for ministry emphasizing godly character, deep roots in the Word of God, and powerful demonstrations of signs, wonders and miracles - all flowing out of an intimate relationship with the Lord.

At APC-BC in addition to sound teaching we emphasize the love of God in demonstration, the anointing and presence of the Holy Spirit and the supernatural work of God. Several young men and women have been trained and sent out to fulfill God's call over their lives.

We offer three programs:
One-year Certificate in Theology and Christian Ministry (C.Th.)
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Classes are held each weekday, **Monday to Friday from 9:00am-1pm**. Day scholars, working professionals, and home-makers can attend these classes and continue with their work day after 1pm. Separate hostel facilities are available for men and women who desire to be residential students. Students participate in field work, special seminars, prayer and worship times in the afternoon sessions, each weekday from 2pm-5pm. The afternoon sessions are optional for day scholars (non-residential students). All students are encouraged to serve at one or more local churches over the weekends.

To **apply online**, and for more information about the college, curriculum, eligibility criteria, tuition costs and to download the application form, please visit: **apcbiblecollege.org**

APC-BC is accredited by the Nations Association for Theological Accreditation (NATA).

We know that God works through His Word. That is how He created everything, by His power released through His Word. God's Word is a carrier of the life and power of God that can affect every aspect of our lives. God has given us His Word and seeks to work in us through the power of His Word. He has also revealed to us how to receive His Word so that the life and power contained in His Word is released into us causing His supernatural work to take place in us. While it is true that God by the power of His Holy Spirit will demonstrate His work in spectacular ways, with signs and wonders, we must not forget that God also works by His Word. Many believers miss out on the supernatural work of God, that God desires to release through His Word, because they keep seeking the spectacular. This book unveils for us simple truths that will help us receive and experience the supernatural power of God released in us through His Word, the miracle seed.

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